



AUG. 1973

NOW!! FULL COLOR COMICS!!

VAMPIRELLA

588856
PDC
75c

Devils and demons haunt old Arthur Toltter's mansion. Arthur knows because he has seen them. He watched as they murdered his beloved wife. And the most ferocious of these hell-spawned beings, the one he loved most, is his granddaughter.

THE DEMON CHILD



Under the glow of the full moon, an innocent love affair ends in horror. Dying lovers spawn the first werewolf.

MOONSPAWN



A masked, mad butcher creeps into the homes of beautiful young women, hunting for their blood, for their very lives. Looking for much, much more.

FRINGE BENEFITS



Pendragon betrays Vampirella and the girl from Drakulon becomes a human sacrifice for the Chaos cult.

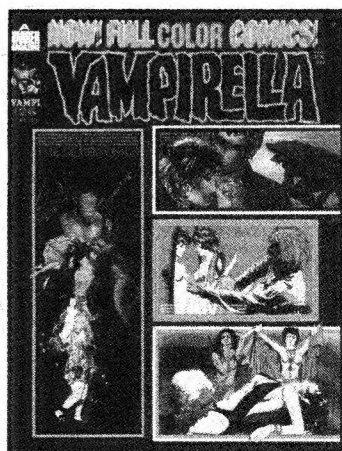
DEMONS IN THE FOG



AAAAH...THERE YOU ARE./I WAS WONDERING WHERE YOU'D GOTTEN TO. DON'T BE AFRAID. COME ON OVER AND REST YOUR WEARY BONES WHILE I TELL YOU THE SAD TALE OF THAT RAREST OF ALL CREATURES, A DOCTOR WHO MAKES HOUSE CALLS.

DEATH AND DOCTOR MORBIDUS





OUR COVER
Jose Gonzalez, Esteban Maroto, Jose Bea and Ramon Torrents share the cover spotlight, giving you a sneak preview of the unearthly delights waiting in this issue.

Editor & Publisher
JAMES WARREN

Managing Editor
W.B. DuBAY

Production
W.R. MOHALLEY

Cover Color
BILL DUBAY

Artists This Issue
AURALEON
JOSE BEA
ESCOLANO
JOSE GONZALEZ
ESTEBAN MAROTO
MUNES
RAMON TORRENTS

Writers This Issue
JAMES CRAWFORD
GEORGE HENDERSON
LYNN MARRON
DOUG MOENCH
LEN WEIN

VAMPIRELLA

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ISSUE NO. 26
AUGUST 1973

VAMPI'S SCARLET LETTERS

"My only objection to the VAMPIRELLA series is your use of Pendragon as a comedy-relief character," writes Norman Davison of Union, N.J. Check out Pen this issue, Norm.

DEMONS IN THE FOG From out of New Orleans' morning mists a stranger comes, with a proposition for Pendragon. "Save your grandson, Patrick. And *kill* the woman responsible for his death. Kill VAMPIRELLA!"

MOONSPAWN Picture a gypsy caravan. A full moon. Two lovers. And an innocent love affair which ends in the spawning of a blood-lusting, ravenous beast. Esteban Maroto tells the origin of the first werewolf!

FRINGE BENEFITS Lying in a pool of her own blood, Jenny looked up to see the twisted face of her assailant. Laying, dying, she couldn't understand why this man with the contorted features would want to KILL her!

DEMON CHILD Arthur Tolter, psychic investigator knew the occult when he saw it. And when he saw his new granddaughter, Mary, he knew this was no ordinary child. A *demon* was now in full possession of the girl.

BLOOD BROTHERS Everyone knows there is big money in religion these days. But it takes a thief to become a brother in the religious order hoarding the underground gold cache. A thief with no fear of the holy ghost.

VAMPI'S VAULT Paul Neary, junior member of the Warren art team tells what it's like being a rookie in the big leagues. He's not impressed. More of our fabulous secrets behind the comics. Plus fanzine reviews, too.



"Vampirella—beauty like Aphrodite and Helen of Troy!"

GOTCHYA! Who is the mercenary creep artist who "did" the back cover of VAMPIRELLA #23? Hang this cold-blooded pen-pusher! As any devoted Vampi fan knows, the mark of the bat adorns the lush, upper RIGHT quadrant (we all have to bend a little—I thought I'd save your blue pencil...) of Vampirella's beautiful, bloodthirsty bod.

JOHN AALBORG
Miami, Florida



Can you believe it—the culprit was none other than my managing editor/artist, Bill DuBay! And you'd think after all the STARING he does, he'd at least get THAT right ...

Vampi, I have enjoyed your books very much. At first, I was turned off by an overdose of stories about the conflict between the sexes; but since your writers have stopped indulging in their subconscious fears, your stories are the best.

By the way—what happens to your costume when you turn into a bat?

WILLOW HERBERT
Birmingham, Alabama



Why don't you ask my friend, Bob, in the letter below? He's got the best explanation I'VE ever heard!

Please count me as totally disagreeing with Kathleen La-Claire's statement in VAMPIRELLA #23 that "the only thing wrong with your magazine is SCIENCE FICTION!" I have been an avid reader of science fiction for the past six years. It has opened new concepts of human thought to me, it has taken me through new dimensions of adventure and emotions, and it has added to my knowledge of life by letting me see through other "people's" lives, actions, and thoughts. I think Vampi needs more science fiction, as in issue #21, "Slitherers of the Sand."

PAUL McMANUS
Ponchatoula, Louisiana

Somehow, it didn't take me long to find something to gripe about in VAMPIRELLA #23. I found the art in all stories fantastic as usual, but there were only two selections worth reading twice—the Vampirella saga and "The Accursed."

Keep up this type of work, young lady, and Cousin Gooley and Uncle Skin Dome will force you out of business!

B.W. ADAMS
Baton Rouge, Louisiana

In VAMPIRELLA #23, at the bottom of the letters page, there was a very frantic picture of you that said you were "biting your nails" because you thought nobody loved you. Well—that's what you think! We all love you, Vampi,

WENDY ACHILLI
ANN CALATY
COLLEEN MALONEY
Niagara Falls, New York

Speaking as a male reader who digs all kinds of stories dealing with the occult, I would have to say that Vampi IS one sexy vampire. However, looking from the women's lib side of the story, I would also have to say that she IS chauvinistic.

BUT—both of these factors are dwarfed completely by the fact that Vampirella is a very believable character. This is most important also—she doesn't use her body to get her point across or to solve her problems, she uses her mind. Vampirella is a real improvement and advancement over the typical comics portrayal of women,

R. DWAIN ESTES
Norfolk, Virginia

When reading VAMPIRELLA #22. I was more than just a little unsettled by our intellectual little "Gremlin's" letter. How typical of society to sound so intelligent and yet remain so closed-minded. Today's realities are too harsh—war, pollution, and racial strife. So that's why, to some people, magazines—particularly of the VAMPIRELLA calibre, are of unique escape value. Everyone knows how it is to fantasize with a good book, to become absorbed by the characters and the plot—and the same can be done with nearly anything. Music, painting—or VAMPIRELLA. Certainly, VAMPIRELLA is chauvinistic, but fantasy should not be bound by that kind of societal judgment. Some people want the kind of escape, rest period, break, or whatever, in which they can take Adam's place or Vampi's place in a story that will involve them and let live with adventure, excitement, and emotion—amid the Gonzalez mastery of art.

One should read for what something has to offer, and not criticize it for what it lacks. That's why everyone has a free choice in what he reads during his leisure time. Surely, many people don't or won't ever buy a Warren magazine, but the people who do buy them should do so because they know and like what they're getting—and with VAMPIRELLA particularly, that's the best that can be found in horror, fantasy, myth, and the occult. If a person does not want this, he should spend the money on something else he'd enjoy.

I'll always be a VAMPIRELLA fan because I dig what it has—and that's a lot—and not what it supposedly lacks.

SGT. BOB CUNNINGHAM,
USAF
Bossier City, Louisiana

As I read VAMPIRELLA #22, I took a special interest in the long letter from "the Gremlin." As an avid reader of VAMPIRELLA and an avid girl-watcher, I was both amused and dismayed by the Gremlin's letter. Her main complaint seemed to be that she thought VAMPIRELLA to be a male-chauvinistic magazine because of the full-breasted, long-legged females that inhabit its pages. Or perhaps it was the fact, in her mind, that said femmes are displayed as sex symbols. Or perhaps both?

In any case, I think her complaints are unfounded. Surely, the women of VAMPIRELLA's stories are intended to be beautiful. In drawing a woman for a story, why not make her lovely? The same goes for male characters, as well. Surely, Adam is no slouch in the physique or features. Nor are Orpheus, the Greek hero, or the dhampir of "Cry of the Dhampir."

Beauty is far more inspiring than plainness. The ancient Greeks would hardly have worshipped Aphrodite had she been a "plain-Jane;" nor would they have "launched a thousand ships" if Helen of Troy had been anything less than magnificent. The same applies to VAMPIRELLA. How many people would read it if the characters, both male and female, were portrayed as slovenly and unattractive? It is always much more pleasant to look upon beauty. I feel the Gremlin is missing the point that you are trying to make with your artwork—that is, that human beings are beautiful.

SAM MILLIGAN
New Hampshire

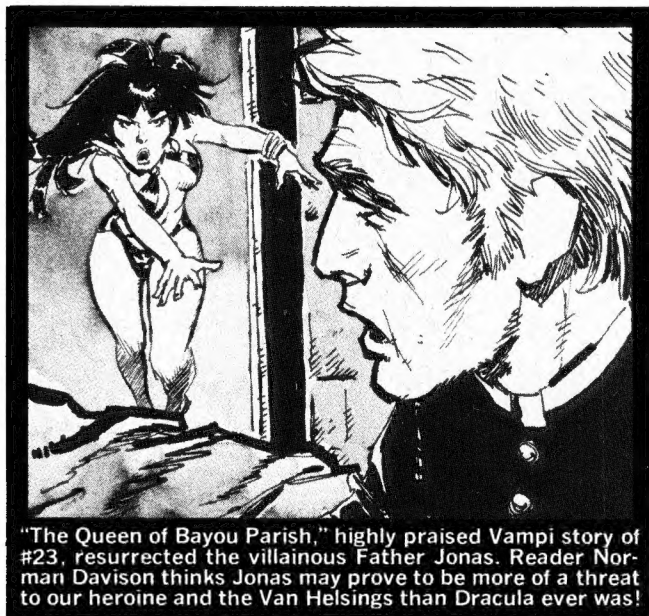


"The Gremlin's" letter of issue #22 provoked such VOLUMES of mail that my editors felt it only fair to run a further sample of the replies. Again, many thanks to all my readers for their thoughtful responses.

Don't feel bad, Vampi, everybody loves you. Some of us just have cramped writing hands!

I am a mom of four, and I am very happy to say that I haven't missed a VAMPIRELLA issue since you first came to life on the newsstand. This is just to let you know that you are also my favorite model, and that not an issue goes by without drawing your pic. I have a whole wall full of them now! I want you to know how we all love you at our house!

ROE LANZETTA
Newark, New Jersey



"The Queen of Bayou Parish," highly praised Vampi story of #23, resurrected the villainous Father Jonas. Reader Norman Davison thinks Jonas may prove to be more of a threat to our heroine and the Van Helsing than Dracula ever was!

"Vampi-using mind instead of body!"

Congratulations are in order for Steve Englehart for his work on the scripts "Hell From On High" and "The Blood Queen of Bayou Parish" in VAMPIRELLA #22 and 23, respectively.

"Hell From On High" is, I think, probably one of the best VAMPIRELLA scripts I've seen since Archie Goodwin left the series. Englehart's method of writing is remarkably similar to Goodwin's: the portrayal of Vampirella not as a super-heroine; but as a realistic and believable character, who, despite her need for blood and her unusual powers, is only too human at heart. She is a warm and loyal friend, or a deadly and implacable enemy. And occasionally—just often enough to make the series interesting—her need for blood gets out of control, and makes her a threat to any and all about her.

Also reminiscent of Goodwin are Englehart's plots; usually in the form of a twist or surprise ending. This is evident in "Hell From On High," when it is revealed that Jonas is the real villain; and his death by the very symbol he had rejected—the cross—was a superb piece, an excellent example of a surprise ending. Also, the story was important to the overall Vampirella saga, as it finally cleared up exactly who was responsible for Kurt Van Helsing's death.

In "The Blood Queen of Bayou Parish," Jonas once again returns to plague Vampirella and her friends. The story itself was a taut, fast-moving thriller; and if the ending is any indication of things to come, it looks as if Jonas may prove to be more of a threat to Vampirella, Pendragon, and the Van Helsing's than Dracula ever was. Unlike Dracula, Jonas hasn't any redeeming qualities at all—he's just a very persistent and deadly foe.

In both issues, Gonzalez' artwork speaks for itself. Judging from the letters appearing in the fan column, he seems to be quite popular these days.

However, I do have a bone to pick with you; namely, the character of Pendragon. My only objection is the continual use of him as a comedy-relief character in most of the recent scripts. Despite his weaknesses and shortcomings, Pendragon is not entirely without courage: don't forget he saved Adam's life at the risk of his own way back in issue #14, in "Isle of the Huntress." I think he could be a little more fully developed, and could make a much more interesting and important

character to the series as a whole. The same could be said for Adam Van Helsing, as well. Perhaps he might learn some of the finer points of the occult arts from his father.

In any event, I thoroughly enjoyed both issues. In addition to the continuing Vampirella saga, both issues had good artwork and stories. Although I do think it's a good thing to discontinue the "Tomb of the Gods" series, Maroto is a superb artist. The stories were a little too surrealistic for my taste.

NORMAN DAVISON
Union, New Jersey

In issue #23, Roe Kamp asked why vampires' clothing changes form with them. The clothing turns into ectoplasm. Ectoplasm is that cloudy vapor that appears during form changes. It's the body tissues greatly expanded and controlled by psychic force. As ectoplasm is very plastic, it can topographically take almost any form.

So adaptive is this bio-kinetic force, a material even vaguely organic worn within the body's aura is incorporated into this topographical alteration. Metal amulets, bracelets, etc., ease form changing, because they act as force condensers. They are also changed if they are small and thin, preferably of gold, a very elastic metal.

I don't worry about such details when reading this great magazine, but this one was too interesting to overlook.

ROBERT G. SCHREIB
Fords, New Jersey

Issue #23 isn't the best issue you've put out, but then, it isn't the worst, either. The cover was okay, but return Enrich to doing your covers. His work on the cover of issue #18 proves what a master he is.

Now down to business... The Vampirella story was rather poor this month. Get back Drac as a character! "The Cobra Queen" was an average story, but Esteban Maroto's art was fantastic, as usual. "Call it Companionship" was, unfortunately, the worst thing in the mag—artwise and storywise. Personally, I felt the idea behind it was sick.

So much for my complaints, and on to my praises. "The Accursed" was the best effort this month, although I'm not usually a fan of Jose Bea's art. But I did love Auraleon's artwork on "The Witch's Promise." "Won't Eddie Learn?" was good in both departments.

STEVE FLAA
Austin, Texas



What's wrong with this picture? Reader John Aalborg saw it right away—Vampi's "birthmark" is on the wrong side!

Talk about covers—! The cover on VAMPIRELLA #23 was great! It was so beautiful that I compared it to my favorite cover, on VAMPIRELLA #18, and found it very similar in artistic talent.

"The Blood Queen of Bayou Parish" was excellent, although I did become a little confused when you switched from Vampi to Sally Sue. The witch was drawn so close in appearance to the beautiful Vampi, that I thought she was a double. Even with this minor flaw in the art, this was the best story since the beginning of the Vampirella series.

TONY ANZIANO
West Springfield, Mass.

For over twenty issues, I have been a fan of VAMPIRELLA, so I know what I'm talking about when I say issue #23 was great! "The Blood Queen of Bayou Parish" was the best story, with "The Accursed" almost as fine. Actually, all the stories were good.

RAY RODECKER
Queens, New York

Vampi, your mag is going steadily uphill. So here are my personal VAMPIRELLA awards, taking into consideration issues 15-23 (with the exception of 19 because it was a yearbook). Here are the five categories:

1. Best all around issue: VAMPIRELLA #22.
2. Best cover VAMPIRELLA #18.
3. Best story "Cry of the Dhampir" from VAMPIRELLA #22.
4. Best artwork Jose Gonzalez for the "Vampirella" series.
5. Best all around writer: Steve Englehart for the "Vampirella" series.

That concludes my awards. I'll be back later with awards for issues 24-32. See ya then!



VON BODENHAUSEN
Bellevue, Nebraska

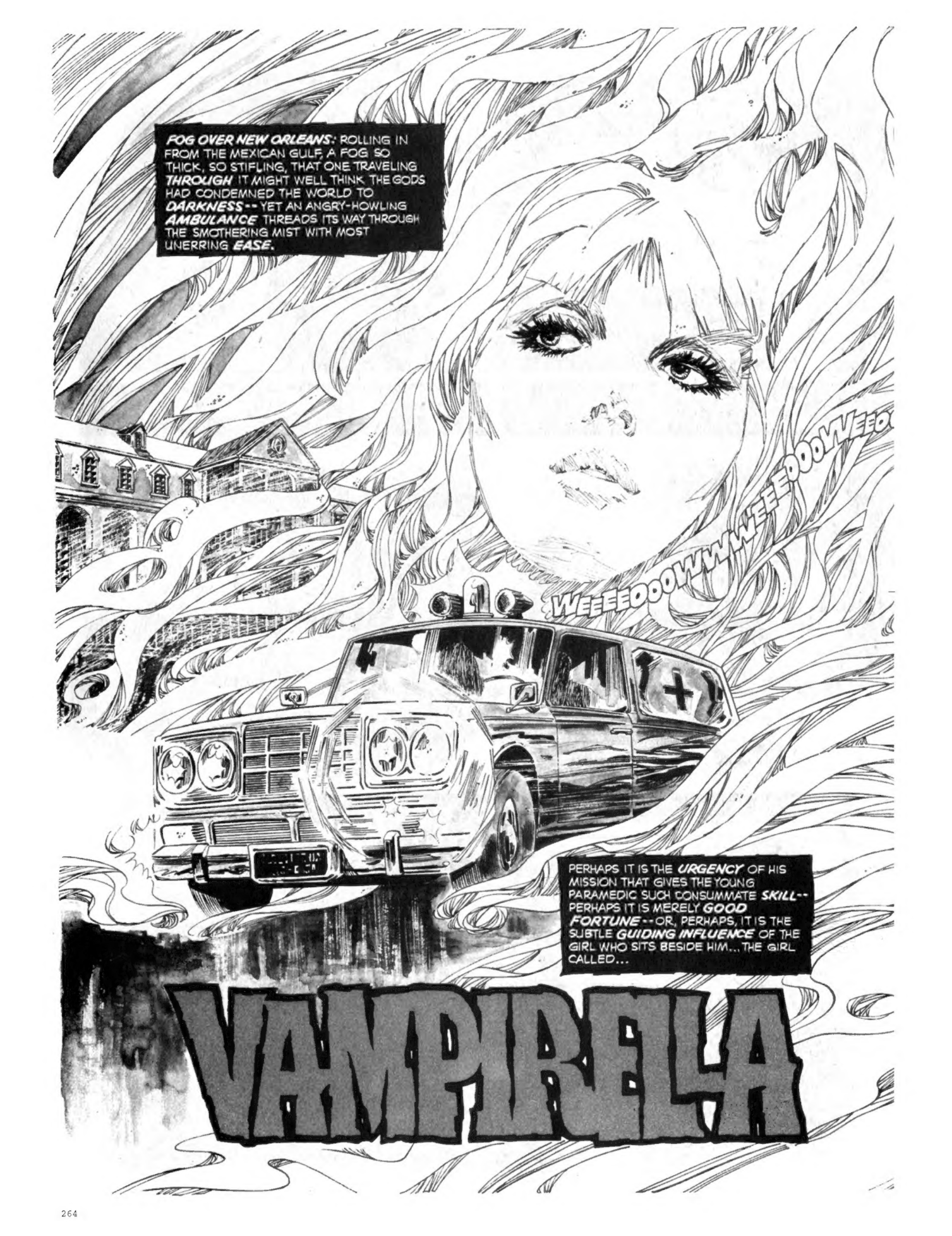
On behalf of Steve, Jose, Enrich (cover artist of #18), and all those associated with issue #22, I think you. Well, Greer Garson I'm not, but I certainly enjoyed accepting your awards!

"HOW DO I LOVE THEE?"

"Let me count the ways!"

Okay—that's all of the poetry you'll hear from ME until I get some more of YOUR poetic letters!

Send them right away to:
SCARLET LETTERS



FOG OVER NEW ORLEANS: ROLLING IN FROM THE MEXICAN GULF, A FOG SO THICK, SO STIFLING, THAT ONE TRAVELING **THROUGH** IT MIGHT WELL THINK THE GODS HAD CONDEMNED THE WORLD TO **DARKNESS**-- YET AN ANGRY-HOWLING **AMBULANCE** THREADS ITS WAY THROUGH THE SMOTHERING MIST WITH MOST UNERRING **EASE**.

PERHAPS IT IS THE **URGENCY** OF HIS MISSION THAT GIVES THE YOUNG PARAMEDIC SUCH CONSUMMATE **SKILL**-- PERHAPS IT IS MERELY **GOOD FORTUNE**--OR, PERHAPS, IT IS THE SUBTLE **GUIDING INFLUENCE** OF THE GIRL WHO SITS BESIDE HIM... THE GIRL CALLED...

VAMPIRELLA

HER GLEAMING EYES STARE SOLEMNLY
AT THE ROAD AHEAD--ALWAYS
AHEAD-- NEVER **BEHIND**-- FOR
WHO **KNOWS** WHAT SHE MAY HAVE
LEFT THERE...?



SURELY NOT THE CURIOUS YOUNG MAN
WHOSE ATTENTION TURNS NOW AND
THEN FROM THE MISTY ROAD AHEAD TO
WONDER AT THIS STRANGE, SILENT
BEAUTY...

...BUT **WONDER** ONLY-- FOR HE CANNOT SEE THE DRUG-
INDUCED **HORRORS** THAT STILL CLAW AT HER
SUBCONSCIOUS...



HE CANNOT **RELIVE** THE AWFUL EVENTS THAT ECHO
OVER AND OVER AGAIN IN THE MIND OF THE MAID FROM
DISTANT **DRAKULON**...



ALL HE KNOWS IS WHAT HE **SAW** WHEN HE ANSWERED THIS
STRANGE GIRL'S NEAR-HYSTERICAL **CALL**-- THE CARNAGE--
THE SLAUGHTER-- THE TRAGIC **WASTE**...



--AND HE BELIEVES, IN HIS NAIVETÉ, THAT HE **UNDERSTANDS** HER FEELINGS...



IN TRUTH, HE UNDERSTANDS **NONE** OF THIS. NOR
ANY OF THE PEOPLE **INVOLVED**...

VAMPIRELLA: HER ALIEN SYSTEM FIGHTING OFF THE EFFECTS OF A DISTINCTLY TERRESTRIAL **POISON...**



PENDRAGON: SOBERING, AT LAST, TO THE SHATTERING REALIZATION THAT HIS ABSENCE OF MANY YEARS HAS BEEN THE VERY **DEATH** OF HIS SON-IN-LAW, RICHARD GRANVILLE. AND BECAUSE OF HIM, HIS DAUGHTER SARA HAS BEEN ARRESTED, TAKEN AWAY AS RICHARDS' ACCOMPLICE IN HIS CRIME KINGDOM.



ROSE: PENDRAGON'S EX-WIFE, TRAPPED WITH AN INFIRM BODY, NOW TRAGICALLY **SHOCKED** AT HER DAUGHTER'S ARREST ...AND THE LOSS OF HER BELOVED SON-IN-LAW!



PATRICK GRANVILLE: CLINGING TENUOUSLY TO LIFE, HIS RICH, RED BLOOD ALMOST **DRAINED**, A VICTIM OF A DRUG-CRAZED **VAMPIRELLA...**



THESE ARE THE FORTUNATE **SURVIVORS** OF THAT HELL-WRACKED **HOUSE.**



FORTUNATE? YEAH... SURE.

I'LL BE **STRAIGHT** WITH YOU PEOPLE. IT LOOKS **BAD!** THE BOY NEEDS A MASSIVE **TRANSFUSION**, BUT HIS BLOOD-TYPE IS **RARE--VERY RARE!**

OUR LOCAL SUPPLY IS **INSUFFICIENT** FOR THE BOY'S NEEDS, UNFORTUNATELY, BUT WE'LL DO OUR **BEST.**



DOCTOR, **PLEASE--!** PERHAPS MY BLOOD--?

YOUR BLOOD, MR. PENDRAGON? I'M SORRY--

--BUT WE HAVEN'T THE FACILITIES TO FILTER ALL OF THAT CHEAP **BOOZE** OUT OF IT!

WELL, I--ER--BELIEVE **THAT** WAS A GOOD CUE TO **EXIT** IF EVER THERE WAS ONE!

PENDRAGON, **DON'T--!**

NO--NO, MY DEAR, I'M QUITE **ALL RIGHT!** I'M MERELY STEPPING OUTSIDE FOR A BIT OF... **AIR!**



EXIT →

HE'S **WEAK**, THIS MAN **PENDRAGON**, WEAK OF SPIRIT, WEAK OF WILL. YET, THIS MAUDLIN MIST-WET NIGHT, HE BYPASSES THE BECKONING TAVERNS, IN SEARCH, MAYHAP OF SOMETHING BESIDES **ESCAPE!**



BUT, ALAS, **MIRACLES** ARE QUITE A **RARE** COMMODITY THESE DAYS...

...OR **ARE** THEY?



HEY, PAPA--HOL' ON THERE JEST A MO'! YOU LOOK LIKE YOU GOT A **PROBLEM** NEEDS SOLVIN'!

BEG PARDON, YOUNG MAN--ARE YOU ADDRESSING **ME?**

'DEED I AM, PAPA! THINGS GOIN' **AGAINST** YOU? **TROUBLE** RIDIN' YO' TAIL?

WELL, I AM HERE TO OFFER YOU A **CURE** FO' WHAT **AILS** YOU!



EH--ER--I'M--ER--AFRAID YOU HAVE MADE A **MISTAKE**, YOUNG SIR. **MY** ESCAPES ARE OF A FAR-LESS-**EXOTIC** VARIETY.



ESCAPES? PAPA, I AIN'T NO JIVE **PUSHER!** I AIN'T SELLIN' ESCAPES! I'M SELLIN' **ANSWERS!**

I CAN MAKE YOU A **HERO**, PAPA--A **REAL** HERO!

I CAN HELP YOU SAVE YOUR **GRANDSON!**

A GAUDY, MYSTERIOUS **SAVOR** MATERIALIZES FROM THE FOG TO OFFER A BROKEN MAN A SPECIAL KIND OF **SALVATION!** A **GENEROUS** ACT? INDEED! BUT WHAT IS THIS STRANGE SAMARITAN'S **PURPOSE**--AND, MORE IMPORTANT STILL--WHAT IS HIS **PRICE?**

DEMONS IN THE FOG!



WELL, DOCTOR--WHAT'S THE **VERDICT?** HAVE YOUR TESTS **CONFIRMED** THAT MY BLOOD IS **COMPATIBLE** WITH THE BOY'S?

COMPATIBLE?
LOOK, I DON'T KNOW WHAT YOUR **SCHEME** IS, YOUNG LADY-- AND I DON'T **WANT** TO--
--BUT DID YOU SERIOUSLY BELIEVE I WOULD USE THE BLOOD OF A **DRUG ADDICT** ON THE BOY?



OH, NO-- MY **DRAKULONIAN** SYSTEM HAS OVERCOME THE **EFFECTS** OF THE COCAINE-- BUT THERE MUST STILL BE **TRACES** OF THE DRUG IN MY **BLOODSTREAM!**

I DON'T KNOW **WHAT** KIND OF HELL THAT CHILD HAS GONE THROUGH-- BUT, I PROMISE YOU, IT WILL NOT HAPPEN **AGAIN!**

UNLESS YOU DESIRE **TREATMENT** FOR YOUR ADDICTION, I SUGGEST YOU **LEAVE** HERE... **BEFORE** I CALL THE **POLICE!**



NO--**NO!** I'VE SUMMONED **ADAM VAN HELSING** AND HIS FATHER, BUT IF **THEY** CAN'T THINK OF ANYTHING, THE BOY WILL **DIE--**

--AND IT WILL BE **MY FAULT--MY--**

VAMPIRELLA! I'VE GOT SOME **GREAT NEWS!**



TAKE IT **EASY**, PENDRAGON-- WHAT'S **THIS** ABOUT?

A **MAN**, VAMPIRELLA! I'VE LOCATED A **MAN** WITH A PRIVATE **BLOOD SUPPLY!** A SUPPLY ENOUGH TO **SAVE** MY GRANDSON'S **LIFE!**

QUICKLY, DEAR GIRL, WE MUST **DEPART** FOR...



...THIS OLD **CHURCH?** WHY **HERE?**

PENDRAGON, THERE'S SOMETHING YOU'RE NOT **TELLING** ME! JUST **WHO** IS THIS MAN WE'RE SUPPOSED TO MEET? HE MUST BE...



...**ECCENTRIC** IS THE WORD, MY DEAR! AND QUITE **WEALTHY** ENOUGH TO AFFORD IT, IF I MUST SAY SO!

BUT, **PLEASE--** WE CAN DISCUSS THIS INFINITELY BETTER **INSIDE** THIS MAGNIFICENT EXAMPLE OF EARLY NORTH AMERICAN **ARCHITECTURE**. DON'T YOU THINK?

COME--PLEASE **JOIN** ME!



THE ARCHITECTURE IS **FASCINATING**, ALRIGHT-- BUT MY INTEREST RIGHT NOW IS IN YOUR PRIVATE **BLOOD SUPPLY!** HOW DO YOU COME TO **HAVE** ONE, MR...? MR...??

FOGG. NATHAN FOGG. YOU SEE, MY DEAR, **I** HAVE THE SAME RARE BLOOD-TYPE AS MR. PENDRAGON'S **GRANDSON!**

I ALSO HAVE AN INORDINATE FEAR OF **DEATH** AND THE FUNDS TO **INDULGE** IT, SO...



THWUMP!

HUH?



PENDRAGON-- WHAT'S GOING ON HERE? WE'VE WALKED INTO A-- **TRAP!**



A TRAP **INDEED**, VAMPIRELLA-- BUT THE KNOWLEDGE COMES FAR TOO **LATE** TO HELP YOU!

AT HER, MY COMPANIONS-- MY FELLOW SERVANTS OF...



WUNNIE!

SHE IS TRULY **BEAUTIFUL**, THIS LISSOME GIRL FROM DRAKULON--AND, PERHAPS, **THAT** IS WHY HER HOODED FOES ATTACK WITH SUCH ABANDON--



--BUT 'TIS AN ACTION THEY QUICKLY COME TO **REGRET**--FOR, BEAUTIFUL OR NO, VAMPIRELLA IS NO ORDINARY **WOMAN**--BUT A **HUNTRESS** FROM THE FAR-FLUNG STARS!

WHAT IS **WRONG** WITH YOU, FOOLS? SHE IS ONLY ONE LONE **WOMAN**! BRING HER **DOWN**, DAMN YOU! **FINISH HER**! NO ONE CAN DEFY THE **COMPANIONS**!

FEAR **NOT**, MASTER FOGG--WE **HAVE** HER!



NO ONE **HAS** ME, LACKEY!



A **BREAK** IN THE ENEMY'S LINE--A MOMENTARY **LULL** IN THE BATTLE--TIME ENOUGH FOR A SINGLE HORRIFYING **THOUGHT** TO RACE ACROSS VAMPIRELLA'S MIND...

COMPANIONS? FOGG CALLED THEM THE **COMPANIONS**! THEN WE MUST BE FIGHTING...

GOD! WE'VE GOT TO GET **OUT** OF HERE!

PENDRAGON--**QUICKLY!** RUN FOR ONE OF THE...



...WIND--**UUHHNN!**



PENDRAGON, HOW **COULD** YOU? HOW **COULD**--





I'M **SORRY**, DR. VAN HELSING, BUT I REALLY CAN'T **HELP** YOU! I HAVEN'T THE FAINTEST **IDEA** WHERE THE OLD MAN AND THE GIRL WENT-- NOR DO I REALLY **CARE**!

YOU DON'T **CARE**?
OKAY, FRIEND "**DOCTOR**"-- BUT I **DO**! THOSE TWO ARE **FRIENDS** OF OURS-- AND THEY JUST MIGHT BE IN **TROUBLE**!



I **DOUBT** IT, YOUNG MAN! I'M QUITE CERTAIN THEY'VE **LEFT** THEIR TROUBLES WITH **ME**--

--A COMPLETE MENTAL AND PHYSICAL **INVALID** OF A WOMAN-- AND A YOUNG BOY, WHO EVEN NOW IS **DYING** OF AN INEXPLICABLE...



...**BLOOD LOSS**!!



ADAM... DR. VAN HELSING... YOU'VE GOT TO **BELIEVE** ME... I DIDN'T **WANT** TO DRINK BLOOD AGAIN... DIDN'T **WANT** TO... THE **DRUG**... IT WAS THE DAMNED...



ENOUGH, MY ALIEN BEAUTY! **AWAKEN**! I WANT YOU FULLY CONSCIOUS FOR THE **CEREMONY** OF THE **SECOND SOUL**!

SLAP!

UUNHHH...



MY "SLEEPING BEAUTY"... WELCOME **BACK** TO THE LAND OF THE **LIVING**!! THOUGH YOUR STAY WILL BE A **SHORT** ONE!

YOU! I WAS **RIGHT**! YOU **ARE** A MEMBER OF THAT DEMON-SPAWNED **CULT**! YOU **ARE** A SERVANT OF...



TEMPORARY CONTROL, GRANTED! BUT SUFFICIENT TO BRING YOU HERE TO PAY FOR YOUR PAST INTERFERENCE!

YOU'RE A FOOL, FOGG! NO ONE CAN WIN PLAYING CHAOS' GAME! NO ONE! YOU HAVE NOTHING TO GAIN.

NOTHING, MY DEAR? DID YOU SAY "NOTHING"? WELL, YOU ARE WRONG, MY DEAR ALIEN WENCH-- I STAND TO GAIN EVERYTHING--

--FOR EVEN A DEMON MAY LUST AFTER MORTAL DELIGHTS! AND A HUMAN FORM HAS NUBERIUS PROMISED ME!

AND THE PRICE HE ASKS IS QUITE REASONABLE INDEED--

MERELY THE SOULS OF VAMPIRELLA AND PENDRAGON!



GREAT NUBERIUS... **COME FORTH** AND RECEIVE THE ACCURSED **SOUL** OF SHE WHO HAS LONG SOUGHT TO **DESTROY YOU!**

COME, ALMIGHTY NUBERIUS AND RECEIVE THE SOUL THAT **SEALS** OUR BARGAIN-- **COMPLETES** OUR PACT!



--THE SOUL I NOW LAY BARE FOR YOU TO--
AARRGGHH!

NO--YOU **CAN'T--!**

PENDRAGON!?!

THERE IS A MOMENT OF STUNNED **SILENCE**-- FOLLOWED BY THE HARSH SOUND OF SNAPPING LEATHER STRAPS--THE MURMUR OF ANGRY VOICES--

--AND A PLAINITIVE CRY TO...

SNAP **OUT** OF IT, PENDRAGON!
RUN WHILE YOU CAN, I'LL BE RIGHT **BEHIND** YOU!



THEN THERE COMES A **FINAL** SOUND! **MORE** THAN SOUND! AND IN A RENDING AND TEARING OF REALITY'S BARRIERS... **NUBERIUS APPEARS!**

THEY'VE **SLAIN** MASTER FOGG! KILL THEM-- **KILL THEM BOTH!**

VAMPIRELLA HAS WITNESSED THIS SCENE BEFORE. **EVIL** FEEDING UPON ITSELF. AND SOME SMALL PART OF HER PRAYS THAT **SOME** OF THE COMPANIONS WILL **ESCAPE** THE DEVOURING HORROR--



AND **NUBERIUS HUNGERS!** WONDERS WHERE HIS PROMISED **SACRIFICES** ARE --

--BUT HE NEED NOT WONDER **LONG!**



FOR SOON NUBERIUS BECOMES AWARE OF FRIGHTENED GASPS AND MUTED CRIES OF TERROR! AND ARE THERE NOT SACRIFICES **APLENTY** SCURRYING ACROSS THE COLD STONE FLOOR?



--BUT SHE PRAYS IN **VAIN--**

--FOR THE HUNGER OF NUBERIUS IS VERY **GREAT** INDEED!

YES, HE'S **WEAK**, THIS MAN **PENDRAGON**, BUT HE IS A MAN... A **GOOD** MAN IN THE FINAL ACCOUNTING.



AND IF THE **SCREAMS** FROM THE RUINED CATHEDRAL DID NOT **UNNERVE** HIM SO, HE MIGHT TAKE **PRIDE** IN THIS NIGHT'S HEROISM.

AS IT IS PENDRAGON FEELS HE'S GAINED A **FRESH** HOLD ON LIFE--A CHANCE TO **CORRECT** THE MISTAKES OF HIS PAST.

AT THE HOSPITAL, VAMPIRELLA AND PENDRAGON ARE REUNITED WITH TWO RELIEVED AND LOVED FRIENDS...



ADAM?
OH, THANK THE STARS, YOU GOT MY **MESSAGE!**

MORE THAN YOUR MESSAGE, VAMPIRELLA--WE GOT HERE IN **TIME!** OUR BLOOD-TYPES WERE THE **SAME** AS THE BOY'S! PENDRAGON'S GRANDSON WILL **LIVE!**

PATRICK? **ALIVE?**
BY JUPITER, WHEN CAN I **SEE** HIM?

I'M AFRAID YOU **CAN'T**, PENDRAGON.



IT WAS THE **DOCTOR**, PENDRAGON--HE FEELS YOU ARE **UNFIT** TO RAISE THE CHILD! AND THE AUTHORITIES **AGREED!** THE BOY WILL BE PLACED IN A **FOSTER HOME!**

AND ROSIE?

HER YOU CAN SEE... THOUGH I WOULD ADVISE YOU **NOT** TO.

NATURALLY, THE ADVICE IS **NOT** TAKEN--AND, FOR THE FIRST TIME IN TOO MANY YEARS, PENDRAGON **TALKS** TO HIS WIFE, STRUGGLING DESPERATELY TO PENETRATE HER PRIVATE **SHELL**. IN SOFT, TREMBLING TONES, HE TELLS HER HOW **SORRY** HE IS FOR SO **MANY** THINGS--



--AND WHEN HE DETECTS A FAINT **MOVEMENT** OF HER EYE, HE THINKS, PERHAPS, HE HAS **UNDERESTIMATED** THE POWER OF **LOVE**--

--WHEN, IN TRUTH, HE HAS UNDERESTIMATED **HATE!**



MURDERER! YOU KILLED MY SON-IN-LAW! YOU KILLED RICHARD!

ROSIE--
NO!

AND SARA IS IN JAIL BECAUSE OF YOU!!




...A **MIRACLE**, I TELL YOU! ALMOST **MINDLESS** FOR ALL THIS TIME--BUT SHE'D HAVE TORN HER OLD MAN TO **PIECES** IF THE INTERNS HADN'T PULLED HER OFF OF HIM!



EPILOG: THE FINAL PIECE OF THE PUZZLE...



DOES IT EVER TRULY **END**?



SALUTATIONS
LYCANTROPHY-LOVERS!
THIS TERROR-TIDBIT
OUGHTA BE THE HOWL
OF THE *CENTURY* AS
WE LEARN THAT THE
BIRTH OF THE FIRST
WEREWOLF IS
NOTHING BUT...

MOONSPAWN

THE MUTED *BUSTLE* OF A GYPSY
CARAVAN'S RESTING-PLACE SPEAKS
OF BENEVOLENT DISINTEREST IN
THE TENDER *AFFAIRS* OF TWO
YOUNG PEOPLE...

WHAT IS
LOVE, STARVOS?
WHAT MAKES US
FEEL THIS
WAY?

IN PREYING
UPON THE *ANSWER*,
FAIR LALENA, I FEAR
WE MAY *KILL* IT...

BETTER TO
LEAVE IT TO ITS
OWN DESTINY... THE
BETTER TO *THRIVE*
AND *GROW*.

WHILE *ABOVE*, --A FRIGID
SILVERY MEMBRANE STRETCHES
SOFTLY ACROSS THE SKY --
WATCHES DOWN *EAGERLY*
UPON THOSE AFFAIRS...

BUT STARVOS,
NOT KNOWING WHAT
LOVE IS, HOW SHALL
WE KNOW WHEN WE
ARE IN DANGER OF
LOSING IT?

HOW LONG WILL
IT *ENDURE*, STARVOS?
HOW *LONG* SHALL
YOU LOVE ME?

AS LONG AS THE
MOON BATHES US
BOTH... AND AS LONG
AS THE *SUN* DRIES
THE MORNING, LALENA,
I WILL LOVE YOU.



THE MOON...
EVER SHARING
THE BEAUTY OF
NEW LOVE...



BEYOND EARTH...
BEYOND THE MOON...
A HURLING
ISLAND IN THE SKY!





UNTIL... THE *IMPACT*...



HURLING EVER
ONWARD ON ITS
ERRAND OF HAVAC...



THROUGH RADIANT ENERGY THAT
ENCIRCLES A WORLD...





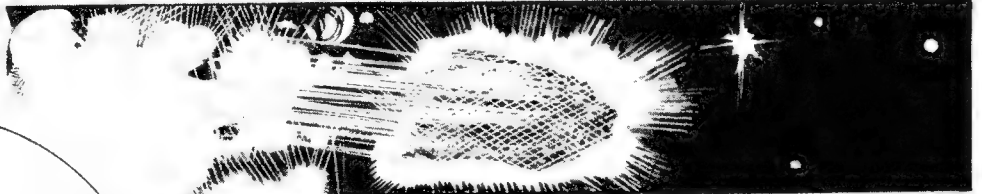
NO-- NOOOOOOOOO--!

...RADIANT ENERGY THAT BECOMES
THE CATALYST FOR A FREAK
METAMORPHOSIS...



STARVOS--! HELP
ME, STARVOS! HELP
MEEEEEE--!

...AND THE ISLAND THAT
LEAVES THE CLOUD IS A
FAR DIFFERENT ONE THAN
THAT WHICH ENTERED...



HOW-OOOOOOOOOO--

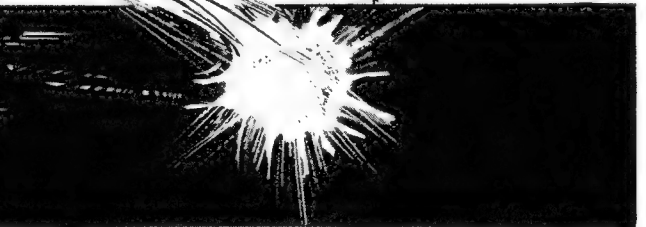


STARVOS!
STARVOS--!

FIERY TONGUES OF ENERGY ERUPT AT
CONTACT WITH EARTH'S LIFE-GIVING
ATMOSPHERE...

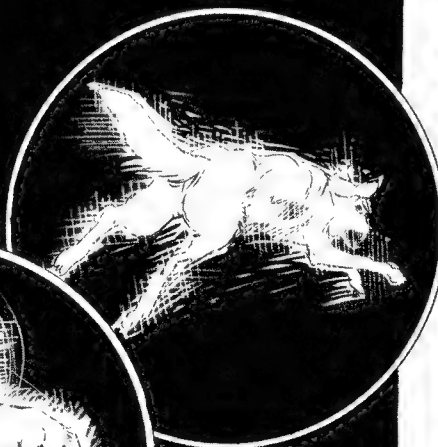


WHEEN?





BATTERED LIKE LEAVES
BEFORE A BLUSTEROUS
WIND, DISCARDED WITH
DISGUST, **OBLIVIOUS**,
HE FEELS NO
PAIN...



...UNTIL HE **AWAKENS...**
AND LIFTS A SWOLLEN,
PULPED FACE TO THE
STINGING NIGHT BREEZE...



LABORIOUSLY, HE BEGINS TO
HAUL HIMSELF UP THROUGH
THE OPPRESSIVE HAZE OF
AGONY...

...SLOWLY, HIS GAZE LEAVES
THE BLOOD-PUDDLED
GROUND FOR **HIGHER**
PLACES...



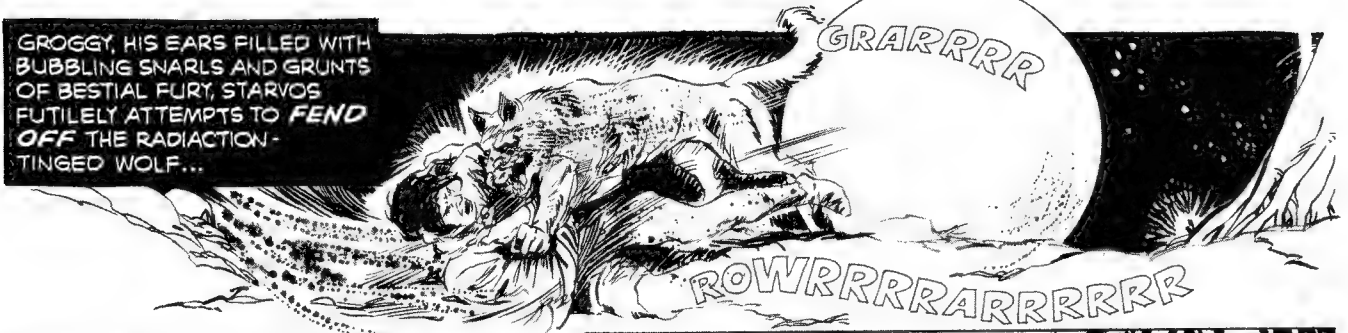
...AND HE **FREEZES...**



THE TAUTLY STRETCHED **SILENCE** LASTS BUT A PROTRACTED **MOMENT...** AND THEN **SNAPS**; ITS COILED TENSION UNLEASHED IN A BOLT OF ARROWING **SAVAGERY...**



GROGGY, HIS EARS FILLED WITH BUBBLING SNARLS AND GRUNTS OF BESTIAL FURY, STARVOS FUTILELY ATTEMPTS TO **FEND OFF** THE RADIATION-TINGED WOLF...



TERROR AND EXCRUCIATING **PAIN** ARE ETCHED IN **CRIMSON** STROKES...

...AND STARVOS' ARM **SEARS** WITH THE MINGLING OF HIS BLOOD AND THE RABID WOLF'S VIRULENT **FROTH...**



THEM, **ABRUPTLY**, IT IS **OVER...**

...AND THE MUTATED BEAST DESTINED TO BE KNOWN AS **WEREWOLF** CEASES ITS ATTACK AND **LOPES** OFF INTO THE SURROUNDING FOREST...

SLOWLY, IN TURGID **CONFUSION**,
THE GYPSY YOUTH'S THOUGHTS
CLEAR... AND HE REMEMBERS...

LALENA
MUST... **FIND**
HER...

...STAGGERS, AND
HALTS... HIS EYES
FORCED UPWARD
TO LOOK UPON
THE SILVER SPHERE
WHICH WAS
MOTHER TO THE
FALLEN METEORITE...

HIS ARM **BURNING** FROM THE WOLF-BEAST'S INTRUDING
SALIVA, HE **STAGGERS** ACROSS THE **MOONLIT** GLADE...

A **CHILL** RIPPLES HIS SPINE AS,
HYPNOTIZED, HE STARES UP PALLID
BEAMS TO THE GLISTENING MOON...

A STRANGE ALCHEMY OF **MYSTICISM**
AND **SCIENCE**, **MOONBEAM** AND
RADIATION COURSES THROUGH HIS
BLOODSTREAM...

AND HE **CHANGES**... TRANSFORMS
INTO A RAVENOUS BEAST, A MAN-
ANIMAL, A **WOLFMAN**...



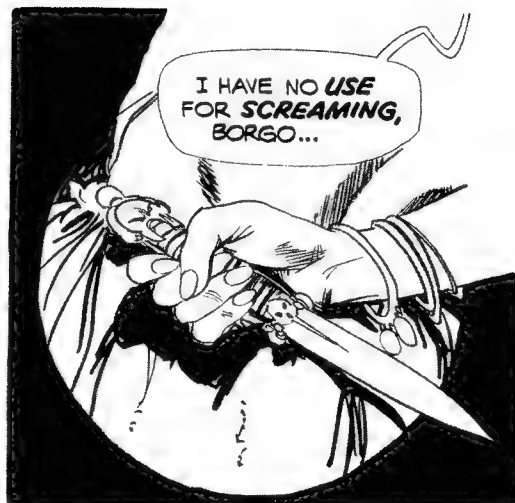
LITHE-LIMBED, HIS BEING
FILLED WITH DYNAMIC
ENERGY, HE SLIPS INTO
THE DENSE FOLIAGE,
TREADING WITH THE
OMINOUS GRACE OF AN
ANIMAL...



DO NOT **SCREAM**,
FAIR LALENA-- IT IS
USELESS THIS FAR
FROM THE
CAMPFIRES.



I HAVE NO **USE**
FOR **SCREAMING**,
BORGO...



JUST AS WELL...SINCE **STARVOS**
IS IN NO **POSITION** TO **ANSWER**
YOUR SCREAMS----

WHA--?!!



A PLUMMETING MASS OF SHAGGY **HORROR**,
STARVOS LANDS LIGHTLY BEFORE THE SHOCKED BORGO...



...AND DIRECTLY INTO THE ARCING **PATH** OF
LALENA'S PLUNGING **SILVER DAGGER**...

THE MAN-BEAST **TENSES**
IN SILENT PAIN, HIS BACK
ARCHES AROUND THE
SILVER DAGGER **BURIED**
IN HIS NOW BLOOD-
MATTED FUR...



SLOWLY, THE WOLFMAN
TURNS TO FACE LALENA...



...AND SHE **SHUDTERS** AT THE **EMOTION**
TRAPPED IN THOSE GLAZED EYES...

THEN, IN A SUDDEN, **FINAL**
DISPLAY OF FRENZIED MOTION,
THE WOLFMAN SPINS TO
LALENA'S LOATHSOME
ABDUCTOR...



...AND WITH **ONE** SCARLET-
STREAMING SLASH... **SLAYS** HIM...



...BEFORE HE, **HIMSELF**, CRUMPLES IN
DAGGER-SPIKED DEATH, HIS ONLY
PURPOSE NOW **ACCOMPLISHED**...



THE GIRL LALENA LOOKS DOWN IN
CONSUMMATE HORROR AS **DEATH**
RETURNS THE HUMANITY A MOON
HAD **STOLEN**...

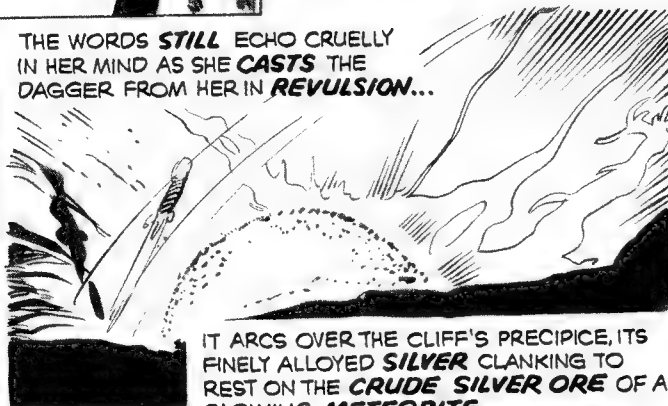
**STARVOS--!
NOOOOOO!**



SHE **RIPS** THE HATED **DAGGER OF SILVER** FROM HER
MURDERED **LOVER'S** BACK...



THE WORDS **STILL** ECHO CRUELLY
IN HER MIND AS SHE **CASTS** THE
DAGGER FROM HER IN **REVULSION**...



...AS HER MIND **RINGS** MOCKINGLY WITH STARVO'S **LAST**
WORDS TO HER: 'THIS SILVER DAGGER WILL **ENSURE** THE
LIFE OF OUR LOVE'...

IT ARCS OVER THE CLIFF'S PRECIPICE, ITS
FINELY ALLOYED **SILVER** CLANKING TO
REST ON THE **CRUDE SILVER ORE** OF A
GLOWING **METEORITE**...

BUT SHE HAS **CAST** THE
DAGGER AWAY TOO SOON...
TOO SOON...



...FOR THE **SPAWN OF THE**
MOON--AND OF THE **WOLF**--
--WILL **NOT** BE STILLBORN.

PROLOGUE:

THE SUN HAS SET EARLY THESE PAST FEW MONTHS, NOT LONG AFTER NORMAL WORKING HOURS. BY SEVEN, IT MIGHT AS WELL BE MIDNIGHT. THOSE LIVING IN DESPERATION ARE AWARE OF THIS, PERHAPS MORE THAN ANY OTHERS--FOR THEY *DEPEND* ON THE NIGHT... AND ITS CONCEALING *SHADOWS*...

I TELL YOU, JANICE, *NOTHING* SEEMS TO BE GOING RIGHT TODAY--FIRST JOHN PHONES TO SAY HE'S GOING TO BE HOME LATE AGAIN TONIGHT... YES, I *KNOW* HE HAS THE TYPE OF JOB WHICH *FORCES* HIM TO WORK LATE SOMETIMES, BUT THIS IS THE *THIRD* TIME THIS WEEK.

AND NOW, AS IF THAT ISN'T BAD ENOUGH, MY GROCERIES STILL HAVEN'T BEEN DELIVERED. YOU CAN'T TRUST *ANYBODY* ANY MORE. IF THE DELIVERY MAN ISN'T HERE WITHIN A HALF HOUR, I'M JUST GOING TO HAVE TO FORGET ABOUT FIXING DINNER AND TELL JOHN WE'LL HAVE TO GO TO A RESTAURANT WHEN HE GETS HOME...

LISTEN, JANICE, I'VE GOT TO RUN--THE DOOR'S BUZZING NOW. MUST BE MY GROCERIES--JOHN ALWAYS USES HIS KEY. YEAH... I'LL CALL YOU TOMORROW. BYE.


BZZZZ
BZZZZZZ

IT'S BEEN A HARD, FRUSTRATING DAY FOR VICKI ALBEN. BUT SOON HER HUSBAND WILL BE HOME, AND WITH LUCK SHE'LL HAVE DINNER WAITING... IF INDEED IT IS THE GROCERY DELIVERER WHO INSISTENTLY PASSES HER DOORBELL...

ALL RIGHT, ALL *RIGHT!* DON'T BE SO IMPATIENT--IF YOU HADN'T TAKEN SO LONG WITH YOUR *OTHER* DELIVERIES TODAY, YOU WOULDN'T BE MAKING *THIS* ONE SO LATE...

VICKI ALBEN DOES NOT STOP TO CONSIDER THAT IT COULD BE ANYONE *BUT* THE MAN WITH HER GROCERIES... AND SO SHE *OPENS* THE DOOR--ONTO SHEER, STARK, *NIGHTMARE*...

WHAT TOOK YOU SO---GOOD LORD! WH-WHAT-?!



TIME TO STOP LURKING IN THE SHADOWS
AND CONFRONT THE BUSINESS AT HAND, FEAR
FOLLOWERS, / SO PULL THE SHADES, SETTLE
DEEPER INTO THAT EASY CHAIR, SIP ON YOUR
LEMONADE, AS YOU CONSIDER POOR VICKI
ALBEN'S HORRIBLE FLIGHT, AND SINK YOUR
FANGS INTO THIS TERROR TALE WHICH OFFERS
SOME LUCRATIVE...

FRINGE BENEFITS

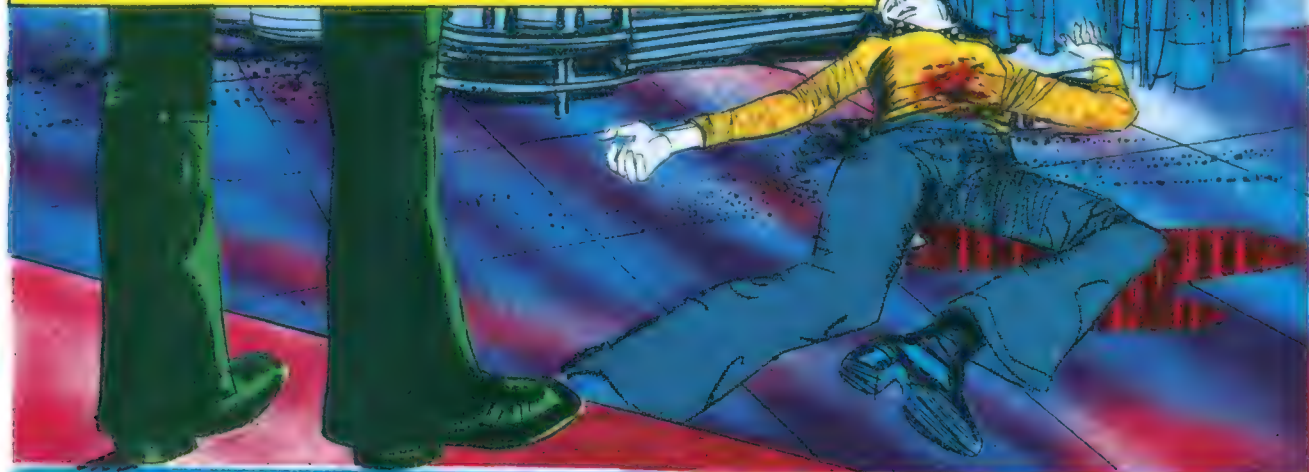
VICKI DOES NOT THINK TO SCREAM -- THE STRIDENT
WAIL BUBBLES INTO HER CONSTRICTED THROAT OF
ITS OWN VOLITION, CHOKING HER, CUTTING OFF
HER BREATH. THE SCREAM WILL NEVER STOP FOR
VICKI -- IT'S THE LAST THING SHE'LL EVER DO. AND
THE LAST THING SHE'LL EVER **SEE** IS THAT WHICH
INSPIRES HER MINDLESS SHRIEK, A SIGHT OF HORROR
AND FRENZIED, BLURRED MOTION WHICH IS SEARED
ON HER DISTENDED EYES FOR THE REST OF HER
PITIFULLY SHORT LIFE...

VICKI FEELS THE REPEATED BLOWS TO HER SQUIRMING BODY AS DULL THUDS OF BRUTAL IMPACT. THE GHASTLY FACE SWIMS BEFORE HER IN A DISORIENTED HAZE OF CREEPING OBLIVION-- AND IT SEEMS LIKE AN AGONIZING ETERNITY OF HORROR. THE WARM STICKINESS OF HER OWN BLOOD SOAKING THROUGH HER CLOTHES SPELLS THE CERTAINTY OF DEATH. DIMLY, SHE IS AWARE OF THIS...

...AND CANNOT UNDERSTAND WHY DEATH IS SO LONG IN COMING. HER GRUESOME ASSAILANT'S FURIOUS RAIN OF HACKING STABS NO LONGER FEELS LIKE DULL THUDDING... BUT NOW ASSUMES A COLD, SHARP, SLICING PAIN EXCEEDING ANYTHING SHE HAS PREVIOUSLY EXPERIENCED. HELPLESSLY, SHE WHIMPERS, REALIZING SHE CAN NEVER CATCH HER BREATH, AND A DESPERATE HAND CLUTCHES AT THE DRAPERY BEHIND HER...

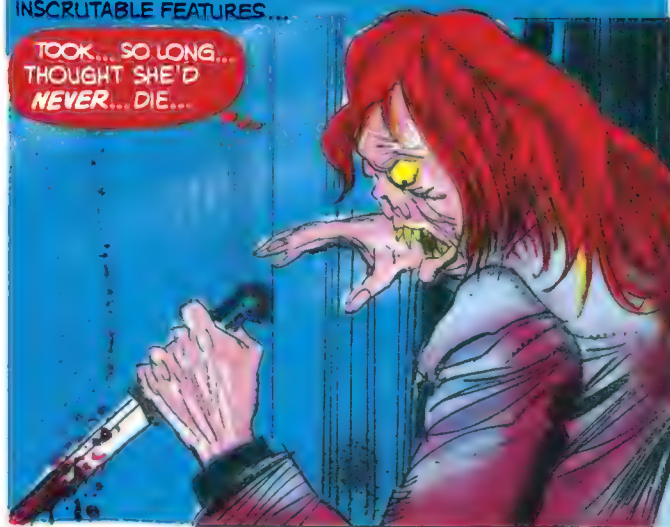


A LAST MOMENT OF FOGGILY PERCEIVED HORROR, THE DEMENTED FACE OF HER ATTACKER SWIRLING BEFORE FADING VISION, HER BLOOD PUMPING LOOSE, THE FEEL OF HER OWN INTESTINES SHREDDING WITH AN ELASTIC-LIKE SNAP, AND VICKI DIES! HER HAND, STILL FIERCELY GRASPING THE FOLDS OF HER HAND-MADE DRAPES, TUGS WITH ONE FINAL DEATH SPASM, AND THE CURTAINS PART FROM THEIR ROD SUPPORT.



THE NIGHTMARE FIGURE RISES FROM HIS BLOOD-SPATTERED HANDIWORK, RAGGED BREATH RASPING IN HIS THROAT... HE LOOKS DOWN UPON THE LEGACY OF CARNAGE WITH INSCRUTABLE FEATURES...

TOOK... SO LONG...
THOUGHT SHE'D
NEVER... DIE...



THEN HE GETS TO WORK. HE LOOSENS THE DRAWSTRING OF HIS BURLAP SACK, USING THE PROCESS AS AN EXCUSE TO WIPE SOME OF THE BLOOD ONTO THE COARSE MATERIAL. SWIFTLY, HE SLIPS INTO THE SILENT KITCHEN AND EFFICIENTLY EMPTIES THE CABINET DRAWERS OF THEIR PRECIOUS SILVERWARE...

LUCKY THIS TIME...
PERFECT SET-UP... FANCY
HOME... RESIDENTS
OBVIOUSLY WEALTHY... WIFE
HOME ALONE... EXPECTING
SOMEONE AT THE DOOR
... PERFECT...



HIS NEXT STOP IS THE BEDROOM, WHERE HE IMMEDIATELY RUMMAGES THROUGH THE MAHOGANY BUREAU DRAWERS TO EXTRACT A THICK WAD OF CASH FROM UNDER THE NEATLY FOLDED, DETERGENT-SCENTED CLOTHING...

ALWAYS HIDE IT IN THE MOST OBVIOUS PLACES... WHEN WILL THEY LEARN? SUCKERS LIKE THIS ARE MEANT TO BE LICKED CLEAN!



THE JOB IS FINISHED, AND THE GHASTLY MURDERER STALKS TOWARD THE FRONT DOOR. AND THAT'S WHEN HE HEARS THE RATTLE ... LIKE THAT OF A KEY, IN A LOCK...



HAD VICKI LIVED, SHE NEVER WOULD HAVE HAD DINNER READY BY THE TIME HER HUSBAND ARRIVED HOME--FOR JOHN ALBEN HAS JUST ENTERED THE STRANGELY TRANSFORMED HOUSE EARLIER THAN *ANYONE* HAD EXPECTED...



JOHN ALBEN SENSES THE STRANGENESS. INSTINCTIVELY, HIS HEAD SWIVELS TO THE GORY CORPSE OF HIS WIFE, SPRAWLED ON THE CARPET THEY HAD CHOSEN TOGETHER LESS THAN A YEAR AGO...



THE GRISLY SIGHT SNAPS SOMETHING WITHIN HIS MIND, AND THE GRIEF-STRICKEN HUSBAND REVERTS TO A PRIMITIVE STATE OF SAVAGE, WANTON DESTRUCTION. BERSERK, HE THROWS HIMSELF AT THE HORRIBLE MAN RESPONSIBLE FOR TERMINATING HIS HAPPY MARRIAGE--AND THE LIFE OF HIS BELOVED WIFE...

FRANTICALLY, THE NIGHTMARISH FIGURE ATTEMPTS TO WARD OFF THE WHIRLWIND BLOWS OF A RAGING HUSBAND. BUT SORROW AND RIGHTEOUS FURY HAVE LENT INHUMAN STRENGTH TO JOHN ALBEN'S TRASHING BODY...

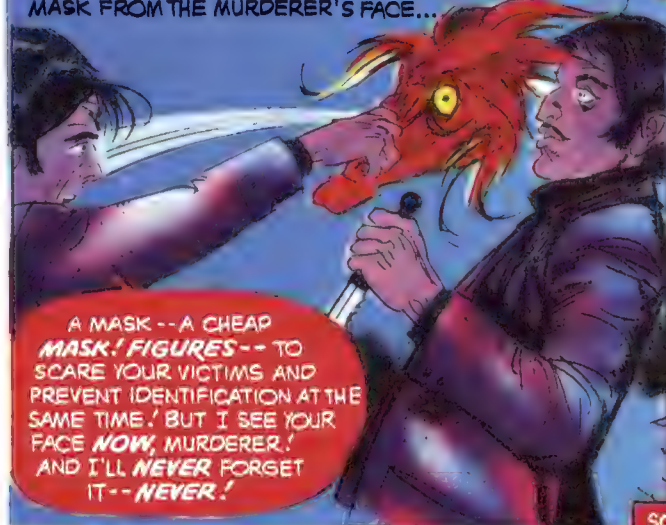
MURDERER! BRUTAL, SENSELESS **MURDERER!** YOU'VE KILLED HER--THE KINDEST WOMAN ON THE FACE OF THIS EARTH AND YOU'VE **BUTCHERED** HER!



THIS GUY'S TOO **STRONG**... GOT TO USE... **KNIFE**...

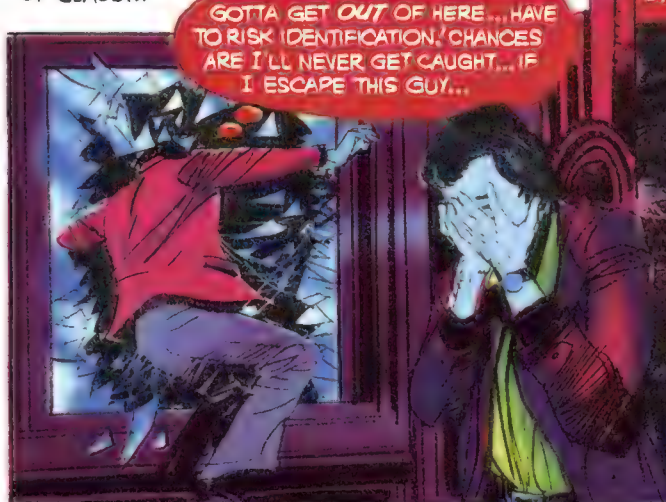


IN PANIC, THE MURDERER GROPE FOR THE KNIFE STUCK IN HIS BELT... AND THE PREOCCUPATION OF HIS RIGHT HAND OPENS A PATH FOR JOHN--FOR JOHN TO CRUMPLE AND SNATCH THE DIME-STORE HALLOWEEN MASK FROM THE MURDERER'S FACE...



A MASK--A CHEAP MASK! FIGURES-- TO SCARE YOUR VICTIMS AND PREVENT IDENTIFICATION AT THE SAME TIME! BUT I SEE YOUR FACE **NOW**, MURDERER! AND I'LL **NEVER** FORGET IT-- **NEVER!**

THE WOUND MOMENTARILY STAGGERS JOHN. HE REELS BACK, HAND AUTOMATICALLY STABBING FOR HIS BLEEDING CHEEK, RELEASING THE MURDERER--ALLOWING HIM TO DIVE THROUGH THE WINDOW IN A SHATTERING EXPLOSION OF GLASS...



GOTTA GET **OUT** OF HERE... HAVE TO RISK IDENTIFICATION! CHANCES ARE I'LL NEVER GET CAUGHT... IF I ESCAPE THIS GUY...

THE MURDERER FLAILS WILDLY... AND FEELS HIS KNIFE SLICE INTO JOHN'S FACE, GOUGING A TUNNEL OF RUPTURED FLESH FROM CHEEKBONE TO CHIN...



SCARCELY NOTICING THE GLITTERING SHARDS OF JAGGED GLASS EMBEDDED IN HIS FOREARMS, THE MURDERER PICKS HIMSELF UP AND SPRINTS ACROSS THE LAWN TOWARD ESCAPE... AND TOWARD A BUSY INTERSECTION WHICH HE NEVER SEES, BEING PREOCCUPIED WITH A BACKWARD, UNBELIEVING STARE AT...

HIM! THAT STAB I GAVE HIM MUST NOT'VE BEEN DEEP-- DIDN'T STOP HIM AT ALL--!

I WON'T FORGET YOUR FACE, MURDERER! AND I'LL DO THE SAME TO YOU AS YOU DID TO VICKI! I **PROMISE** YOU THAT!



SO OBSESSED WITH WATCHING HIS RELENTLESS PURSUER IS THE FLEEING MURDERER THAT HE DASHES STRAIGHT INTO THE INTERSECTION--AND INTO THE PATH OF A HURLTLING CAR. BRAKES SCREECH AND SQUEAL, SETTING OFF THE ACRID SCENT OF BURNT RUBBER, AND THE CAR SWERVES WILDLY, CAREENS ACROSS THE ASPHALT...

...AND SKIDS INTO A JARRING COLLISION WITH THE ASTONISHED MURDERER. THERE IS THE SICKENING SOUND OF BRITTLE BONES CRACKING AND FRACTURING, A MUTED SOUND HEARD ABOVE THE DIN OF SCREECHING TIRES, A TIMELESS INSTANT FILLED WITH THE SOUR PANGS OF ENCROACHING NAUSEA, FROZEN HORROR...



SKREEEEEEEE--THUD!!

SKREEEEEEEE

...AND THEN DARKNESS, THE DARKNESS OF OBLIVION SPILLING OVER AND INTO THE DEEPER DARKNESS OF GRAY-SPECKLED FADING TERROR.

AND THEN, UNKNOWNABLE TIME LATER, GREAT SPIRALLING WHISKS OF VERTIGO, QUEASY SENSATIONS OF DISEMBODED BUOYANCY, AND THE GRADUAL FORMATION OF DULL, THROBBING LIGHTS... AND THE SHIMMERING FORMS OF TWO MEN... TWO MEN DRESSED IN WHITE...

HE'S COMING TO NOW...

YES... SEEMS HE'LL LIVE AFTER ALL. DAMNED LUCKY AFTER THE CRASH HE TOOK...

THEN THE REMEMBRANCE OF PAST OCCURRENCES ... AND THE REMEMBRANCE OF THE SPEAKING PROCESS...

I...I... WAS HIT... BY CAR... STILL ALIVE...

YES, YOU'RE STILL ALIVE -- AND THERE'S A CHANCE YOU'LL BE NORMAL TOO. BUT YOU HAVE A SERIOUS SURGERY AHEAD OF YOU

-- **LAMENDECTOMY**. ONE OF THE VERTABRAE IN YOUR SPINE CHIPPED-- THE SCARPIAL NERVE HAS SLIPPED INTO THAT CHIPPED GROOVE IN YOUR SPINE --AND ANY ATTEMPT TO WALK WILL CAUSE THE BONES OF YOUR SPINE TO **SQUEEZE** THAT NERVE, SHOOTING SEVERE PAIN DOWN BOTH YOUR LEGS...

WE'VE ALREADY TRIED TRACTION-- WHILE YOU WERE STILL UNCONSCIOUS. BUT SUBSEQUENT ANALYSIS OF YOUR X-RAYS REVEAL THAT TRACTION WOULD BE A TEMPORARY ALLEVIATION AT BEST. WHAT WE HAVE TO DO IS OPERATE-- TO REMOVE THE REST OF THAT CHIPPED VERTABRAE, AND FREE THE SCARPIAL NERVE...

NEVER MIND THAT-- WAS... WAS ANYONE ELSE HURT...?

AMAZINGLY ENOUGH, THE DRIVER OF THE CAR EMERGED UNSCATHED. YOU WERE THE ONLY ONE INJURED. NOW, WE HAVE THE FINEST SPECIALIST IN THE CITY AVAILABLE FOR YOUR OPERATION. ORDINARILY, WE'D MAKE THE INCISION FROM YOUR BACK...

...BUT IN YOUR CASE THERE ARE COMPLICATIONS. THE BONE SOMEHOW CHIPPED ON THE **INSIDE** OF YOUR SPINE, NECESSITATING A **FRONTAL** APPROACH. IN OTHER WORDS, WE'RE GOING TO HAVE TO MAKE THE INCISION OVER YOUR STOMACH AND...

I SAID **NEVER MIND** ABOUT THAT! YOU'RE **SURE** NO ONE ELSE WAS HURT-- ANOTHER **PEDESTRIAN**? I'M FREE TO LEAVE HERE AFTER THE OPERATION...?

WELL, **YES**... PROVIDING THE SURGERY IS A SUCCESS. OH, YOU'LL HAVE TO APPEAR IN TRAFFIC COURT IF THAT'S WHAT YOU MEAN, BUT IF YOU CARRY INSURANCE THERE'S NOTHING TO WORRY ABOUT...

AFTER NOTIFYING HIM THAT SURGERY WILL TAKE PLACE THE FOLLOWING MORNING, THE PHYSICIANS TAKE THEIR SOLEMN LEAVE OF THE ASEPTIC ROOM AND OF THE MURDERER, WHO IMMERSSES HIMSELF IN HIS OWN DARKLING THOUGHTS...

THAT NIGHT, THE MURDERER'S STOMACH IS SHAVED IN PREPARATION FOR THE COMING OPERATION, AN ENEMA ADMINISTERED TO PREVENT THE ELIMINATION OF WASTES DURING SURGERY, AND A SEDATIVE TO MAKE HIM SLEEP...



IF THAT WOMAN'S HUSBAND WASN'T HIT BY THE CAR TOO... WHY DIDN'T HE REPORT ME TO THE POLICE? DID HE THINK THE CRASH **KILLED** ME? **MUST** HAVE... NO OTHER EXPLANATION...

GETTING DROWSY... AFTER TOMORROW, THERE'LL BE NOTHING TO WORRY ABOUT... LUCKY... VERY... LUCKY SLEEPY...



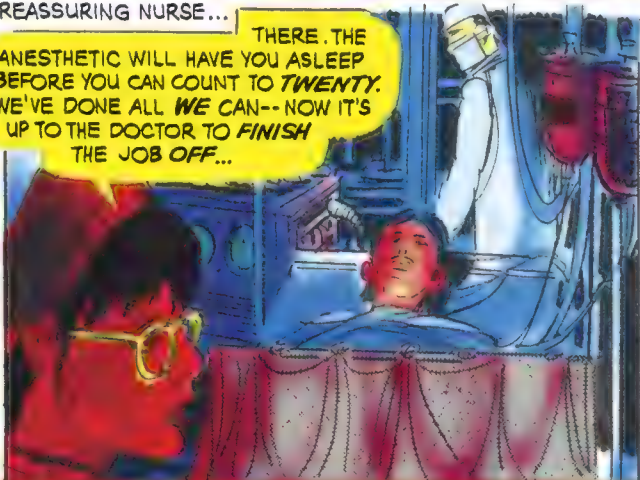
MORNING BRINGS ORDERLIES WHO GENTLY ROLL HIM OFF HIS BED ONTO A MOBILE STRETCHER, AND FROM THERE WHEEL HIM INTO THE OPERATING ROOM...



IMAGINE... THEY EVEN GOT THE BEST SPECIALIST IN THE AREA TO FIX ME UP... IF THEY ONLY **KNEW**...

WITHIN THE STERILE CONFINES OF THE BRIGHT OPERATING ROOM, HE IS TRANSFERRED TO THE OPERATING TABLE. HE FEELS A DISTANT, PULSING ACHES DEEP WITHIN HIM AS A SLAT IS AFFIXED TO THE TABLE, AND HIS ARM STRETCHED OUT ON IT. THE SHARP BITE OF A PUNCTURING NEEDLE, AND THE SOOTHING VOICE OF A REASSURING NURSE...

THERE, THE ANESTHETIC WILL HAVE YOU ASLEEP BEFORE YOU CAN COUNT TO **TWENTY**. WE'VE DONE ALL **WE** CAN-- NOW IT'S UP TO THE DOCTOR TO **FINISH** THE JOB OFF...



THE OBLIVION-INDUCING ANESTHETIC COURSES THROUGH HIS VEINS. HE COUNTS TO TEN BEFORE THE FACE OF THE SPECIALIST, MASKED IN GERM-PREVENTIVE WHITE, LOOMS BEFORE HIS DWINDLING CONSCIOUSNESS... THE VOICE IS MUFFLED, BUT COMMANDING...



NOW DON'T YOU WORRY-- I'LL FIX YOU UP JUST AS I **PROMISED**...

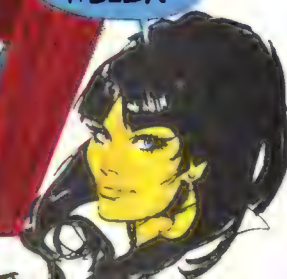
AND THEN HE COUNTS TO 15, 16... AND DUMBLY WATCHES AS THE DOCTOR LOOSENS HIS MASK. THERE IS A RECENT SCAR, FROM CHEEKBONE TO CHIN, A **KNIFE** SCAR, STILL STITCHED. AND THE MURDERER REMEMBERS A PROMISE: "I'LL DO THE SAME TO **YOU** AS YOU DID TO **VICKI**!" HE COUNTS TO 18, 19... AND SEES THE GLITTERING SCALPEL, THE DOCTOR'S SARDONIC WINK... AND HEARS HIS LAST WORDS BEFORE REACHING 20 AND **UNCONSCIOUSNESS**...

...AND I **NEVER** BREAK A PROMISE-- NOT EVEN IF I HAVE TO STAY HERE AT THE HOSPITAL **AFTER HOURS**...

GASP



THAT DOCTOR'S A REAL **CUT-UP**, EH SURGICAL SCREAMERS? TOO BAD THE MURDERER DIDN'T WEAR HIS FRIGHT-MASK TO THE HOSPITAL-- OLD DOC ALBEN NEVER FORGETS A FACE...OR A **DEBT**!



OUTSIDE THE BEDROOM OF ARTHUR TOLTOR, AGING INVESTIGATOR OF SUPERNATURAL PHENOMENA, TWO FIGURES CONVERSE IN LOW TONES. THEY ARE TOLTOR'S DAUGHTER, MARILYN, AND HER HUSBAND, HENTON. WENTWORTH THE WENTWORTHS SPEAK QUIETLY SO AS NOT TO BE OVERHEARD BY THE PATRIARCH LYING QUIETLY IN HIS BED, READING...

ARTHUR TOLTOR HAD SPENT HIS WHOLE LIFE INVESTIGATING REPORTS OF THE BIZARRE OR SUPERNATURAL. YET LATELY HIS KEEN MIND SEEMED TO WEARY UNDER THE BURDEN OF HIS ADVANCING YEARS.

THE ONCE BRILLIANT PSYCHIC INVESTIGATOR HAD BECOME OBSESSED AND THERE WAS NO WAY OF TURNING BACK THE CLOCK. HE HAD ACCUSED MARILYN'S CHILD OF BEING A DEMON SUBSTITUTE FOR HER REAL CHILD AND NO ONE BELIEVED HIM. HOW COULD THEY? HOW COULD ANYONE? HE CLAIMED THAT THE SUBSTITUTE WAS RESPONSIBLE FOR THE DEATH OF HIS WIFE, JOYCE WHO HAD DIED SHORTLY AFTER MARILYN'S LITTLE GIRL WAS BORN.

EVER WONDER WHY EVERYBODY BUT YOU IS SO OUT-OF-STEP? MEET ARTIE TOLTOR. HE TRIED TO TELL THEM BUT NOBODY LISTENED. WHO'D WANT TO BELIEVE THEIR LITTLE BABY IS REALLY A...

DEMON CHILD

HOW ARE YOU TODAY, FATHER?

DO YOU MEAN AM I STILL SENILE AND RAVING?

NOW ARTHUR, WOULD WE THINK SUCH A THING?

YOU WOULD IF YOU THOUGHT YOU COULD PROFIT FROM IT.



SO YOU KNOW ABOUT ME. WELL, IT'S NOT GOING TO HELP YOU, YOU SENILE OLD FOOL. I'M GOING TO HAVE YOU PUT AWAY. MARILYN AND I ARE GOING TO START ENJOYING LIFE FOR ONCE BY ENJOYING ALL YOUR LOVELY MONEY.

JOYCE KNEW AND THEY KILLED HER FOR IT. DO YOU REMEMBER HOW PRETTY SHE WAS? SHE WAS ALWAYS THERE WHEN I NEEDED HER, NEVER AFRAID. NOW SHE'S GONE. I REMEMBER THAT DARK DAY IT ALL BEGAN.



AND HE WENT INTO REVERIE, RELIVING THE PAST...



HENTON'S PLAN WAS SIMPLE, GET THE OLD MAN TO RANT ABOUT HIS PET OBSESSION-- LITTLE MARY. ONCE WORKED UP, HENTON COULD BRING IN WITNESSES AND HAVE TOLTOR PUT AWAY. NO QUESTION THAT THE OLD MAN WAS IRRATIONAL... JUST GET HIM WORKED UP AND HE WOULD DO THE REST.

I'LL IGNORE THAT REMARK, ARTHUR. MARILYN AND I HAVE COME TO TRY AND CONVINCE YOU FOR THE LAST TIME THAT JOYCE DIED A NATURAL DEATH. SURELY YOU MUST REALIZE JUST HOW STRANGE YOUR STORY SOUNDS.

THE HELL YOU HAVE! ALL YOU CARE ABOUT IS SEEING ME PUT AWAY SO YOU CAN GET CONTROL OF THE ESTATE. YOU'RE SO DAMN BUSY TRYING TO COMMIT ME THAT YOU CAN'T SEE THE DANGER YOU'RE IN.

IT ALL STARTED WHEN JOICE AND I FOUND THE BOOK... OH, IF ONLY WE HADN'T...

ARTHUR, IS IT WHAT WE THOUGHT IT WAS?

YES, AFTER ALL THESE YEARS OF INVESTIGATING SUPERFICIAL MANIFESTATIONS OF THE SUPERNATURAL, WE HAVE AT LAST UNEARTHED THE GENUINE ARTICLE.

I'M AFRAID, ARTHUR. THERE IS SOMETHING ABOUT THE BOOK THAT SCARES ME. IT REEKS OF UNSPEAKABLE EVIL. PERHAPS WE SHOULD BURN IT WHILE WE ARE STILL ABLE.

IF ONLY I HAD LISTENED TO HER FEARS SHE MIGHT STILL BE ALIVE. IT WAS IN THAT BOOK THAT WE FIRST READ OF THE CHANGELING HOW THE LORDS OF DARKNESS STEAL HUMAN INFANTS AND LEAVE DEMONS IN THEIR PLACE.

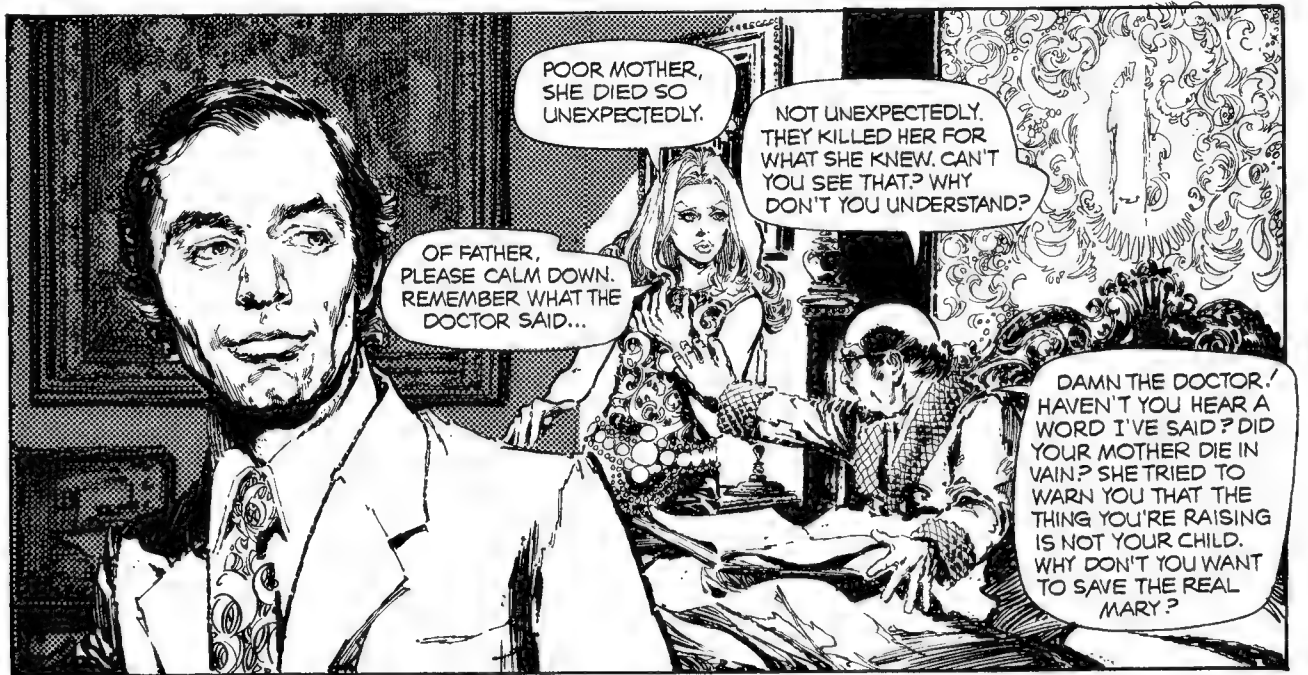




THEN SEVERAL YEARS LATER MARILYN HAD THE BABY. JOYCE DISCOVERED THAT YOUR CHILD, YOUR LITTLE MARY, HAD FALLEN VICTIM TO THE WHIMS OF THE DARK LORDS AND WAS STOLEN AS IF FROM THE WOMB ITSELF.

THE CHANGELING IS A DEMON OF THE DARKEST PITS WHO IS LEFT IN EXCHANGE FOR THE STOLEN INFANT. IT LOOKS AND ACTS LIKE THE REAL CHILD, BUT ITS HEART IS STEEPED IN EVIL AND IT REMAINS EVER OBEDIENT TO ITS EVIL MASTERS.

WHEN JOYCE SAW THE CHANGE SHE WARNED ME ABOUT IT. SOON AFTER... THEY KILLED HER FOR WHAT SHE KNEW AND I LOST MY WIFE, THE FIRST CASUALTY IN THE HOPELESS BATTLE!



POOR MOTHER, SHE DIED SO UNEXPECTEDLY.

NOT UNEXPECTEDLY. THEY KILLED HER FOR WHAT SHE KNEW. CAN'T YOU SEE THAT? WHY DON'T YOU UNDERSTAND?

OF FATHER, PLEASE CALM DOWN. REMEMBER WHAT THE DOCTOR SAID...

DAMN THE DOCTOR. HAVEN'T YOU HEAR A WORD I'VE SAID? DID YOUR MOTHER DIE IN VAIN? SHE TRIED TO WARN YOU THAT THE THING YOU'RE RAISING IS NOT YOUR CHILD. WHY DON'T YOU WANT TO SAVE THE REAL MARY?

HENTON COULD ALMOST FEEL VICTORY IN HIS GRASP. TOLTOR WAS RAVING NOW, ALMOST AT THE DROP OF A HAT. NOW ALL HE HAD TO DO WAS GET SOMEONE TO WITNESS THE OLD MAN'S FRIGHTENING MENTAL DETERIORATION.

ARTHUR, MARILYN IS RIGHT. TAKE IT EASY.

WE'RE NOT UP TO ANYTHING, BUT THEN I DON'T EXPECT YOU TO BELIEVE THAT.

FOR ONCE WE AGREE, I'D SOONER TRUST A SNAKE.

VERY WELL ARTHUR. I'M CURIOUS THOUGH, YOU SPOKE OF A BOOK YOU AND JOYCE FOUND. JUST WHAT ABOUT THIS PRICELESS AND TERRIFYING TREASURE?

MORE BED TIME STORIES, HENTON? ITS CALLED SIMPLY **THE BOOK OF THE ANCIENTS**. IT WAS WRITTEN IN THE DIM BEGINNING WHEN MAN'S AWARENESS OF THE FORCES OF EVIL THAT BUFFET US FROM CRADLE TO TOMB WAS JUST TAKING SHAPE. THE BOOK REVEALED THE SECRETS OF THE AGES AND WAS PASSED DOWN THROUGH TIME TO WARN MAN OF THE DANGER.

DON'T PATRONIZE ME, YOU YOUNG FOOL. DO YOU THINK I'M BLIND TO WHAT'S GOING ON BEHIND MY BACK?

JOYCE AND I FIRST CAME ON THE BOOK WHILE INVESTIGATING A MAN WHO DABBLED IN THE OCCULT. HE HAD TRIED TO USE THE SECRETS OF THE BOOK TO GAIN POWER. UNFORTUNATELY, THE FORCES WERE FAR TOO POWERFUL TO BE CONTROLLED. THEY DESTROYED HIM.

IT WAS IN THAT BOOK THAT WE FIRST LEARNED OF THE PLOT.

PLOT? WHAT PLOT?

LORDS OF DARKNESS... WHY I'VE NEVER HEARD OF ANY SUCH BEINGS OR GODS. SOUNDS LIKE HOBGOBLINS TO ME!

WHY YOU SMIRKING JACKAL! I'M TRYING TO TELL YOU OF A DANGER THAT CONCERNS NOT ONLY YOU AND YOUR DAUGHTER, BUT ALL OF MANKIND AS WELL! HOBGOBLINS! YOU'RE A FOOL, HENTON! A VERITABLE FOOL!

THE LORDS OF DARKNESS... GRIM AND TERRIBLE DEITIES THAT WAIT ON THE EDGE OF TIME AND SPACE... CREATURES CAPABLE OF INCREDIBLE EVIL AND INSATIABLE LUSTS.

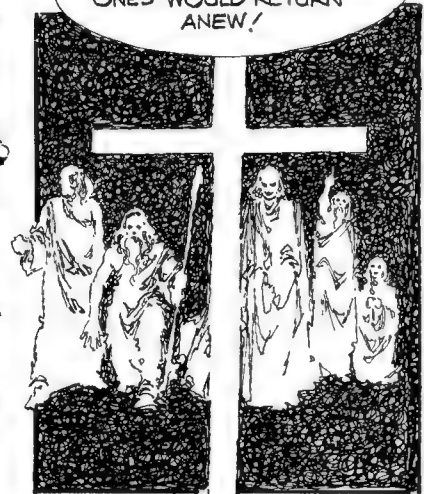



MORE, HENTON?
HOW AN OLD MAN RAVES,
EH? THE BOOK TELLS HOW
AGES AGO MAN
WORSHIPPED TERRIBLE
DEITIES. HE SURRENDERED
COMPLETELY TO THEIR
POWER AND COMMITTED
FOUL ACTS TO WIN FAVOR
IN THEIR EYES.

GODS THAT WERE
AT THE SAME TIME
SUPREMEPLY POWERFUL AND
COMPLETELY CORRUPT. FIENDS
THAT REVELED IN EVERY FOUL
AND VILE ACT MAN COULD
DEVISE. THOSE THAT PRAYED
TO THEM DIED IN STRANGE AND
HORRIBLE DEATHS AND WITH
EACH NEW DEATH THE LORDS
OF DARKNESS GREW IN
POWER.

FINALLY, AFTER
YEARS OF SUFFERING,
MAN REALIZED THE
UNPARALLELED EVIL OF
HIS GODS. IT WAS THEN
HE TORE DOWN THEIR
FILTHY ALTARS AND
BANISHED THEM FROM
EARTH WITH
POWERFUL SPELLS.

IN TIME THERE WERE
OTHER RELIGIONS AND MORE
BENEVOLENT GODS TO PRAY TO.
SOON ALL THE OLD FEARS
WERE FORGOTTEN AND THE
MEMORY OF THE DARK ONES
FADED FROM MEMORY, BUT THE
ANCIENT SPELLS OF PROTECTION
WERE FORGOTTEN TOO. THUS...
THE DANGER THAT THE DARK
ONES WOULD RETURN
ANEW!





THE LORDS OF DARKNESS WERE NOT DESTROYED, ONLY FORCED TO LEAVE EARTH. THEY WAITED PATIENTLY TILL THE INCANTATIONS WERE FORGOTTEN. THE BOOK OF THE ANCIENTS HAS THOSE SPELLS AND NOW I'M THE ONLY ONE WHO KNOWS THEM. IT IS ONLY MY KNOWING THOSE SPELLS THAT HOLDS BACK THE DARK LORDS FROM POURING BACK INTO OUR WORLD. ONLY I CAN STOP THEM, BUT I CAN'T LAST MUCH LONGER.

IT WAS GOING BETTER THAN HENTON HAD HOPED. THE OLD MAN WAS CONSUMED WITH DELUSIONS OF PERSECUTION AND GRANDEUR. WITH FIENDISH GLEE, HENTON PUSHED. HE WANTED STILL MORE.

WHAT ARE THEY PLOTTING, ARTHUR?

WHAT THE USE? YOU DON'T BELIEVE A WORD I'VE SAID. THE IRONY OF IT ALL IS THAT YOUR STUPIDITY AND CUPIDITY WILL DOOM ALL OF MANKIND.

THEN YOU HAVE NOTHING TO LOSE BY TELLING ME WHAT YOU KNOW.

THEY'VE NEVER FORGIVEN MAN FOR ABANDONING THEM. THEY HAVE WAITED FOR COUNTLESS YEARS TO RETURN TO EARTH AND WITH THE USE OF THE DARK POWERS, MOLD IT INTO A LIVING HELL TO SUIT THEIR PERVERSE PLEASURES.

A SMALL FIGURE LISTENED TO EVERY WORD THE ADULTS SPOKE BEHIND THE BEDROOM DOOR. SHE LISTENED CLOSELY AND WAITED.

BUT HOW, ARTHUR? HOW ARE THEY GOING TO DO IT, ARTHUR?

ARE YOU SO BLIND, HENTON? HAVEN'T YOU FIGURED IT OUT YET?

I'M AFRAID I HAVEN'T. NOT JUST YET, ANYWAY.

WITH SURPRISING STRENGTH, TOLTOR GRIPPED HENTON'S THIN ARM.

FIRST THEY MUST BE RID OF ANY THAT KNOW THEM. THAT IS WHY JOYCE WAS MURDERED AND WHY I AM NEXT! ONCE WE ARE GONE THEY WILL CULTIVATE THEIR SINISTER CULT AGAIN AND RETURN FAR MORE POWERFUL THAN EVER. FOR BOTH PARTS OF THIS MASTER PLAN, THEY NEED THE SERVICE OF THE CHANGELINGS.

NOT AGAIN PLEASE...NOT AGAIN, FATHER.

SURELY YOU CAN'T EXPECT US TO BELIEVE THAT OUR OWN LITTLE MARY IS A...A...A

A DEVIL.

THAT'S ABSURD ARTHUR. MARY IS JUST A NORMAL LITTLE GIRL AND NOTHING MORE.

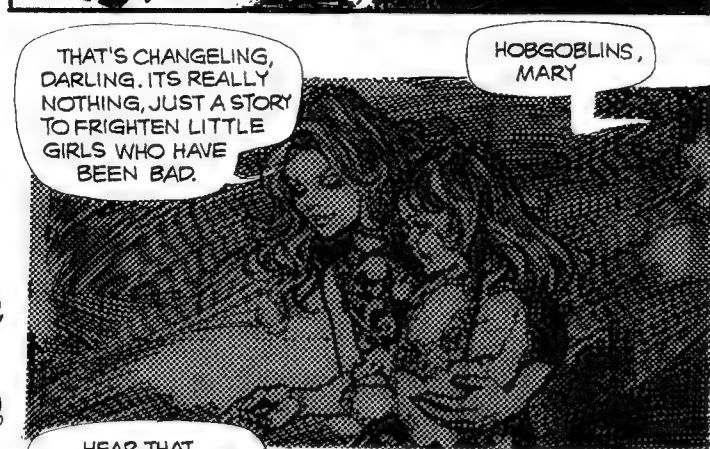
SHE IS NOT JUST A NORMAL CHILD. SHE IS NOT YOUR REAL DAUGHTER AND SHE IS NOT MY GRANDCHILD!!! WHAT'S MORE THAT THING ISN'T EVEN HUMAN. SHE'S A CHANGELING, A DEMON LEFT IN EXCHANGE FOR THE REAL MARY. PLEASE SEE THAT BEFORE THEY TAKE ME! PLEASE!

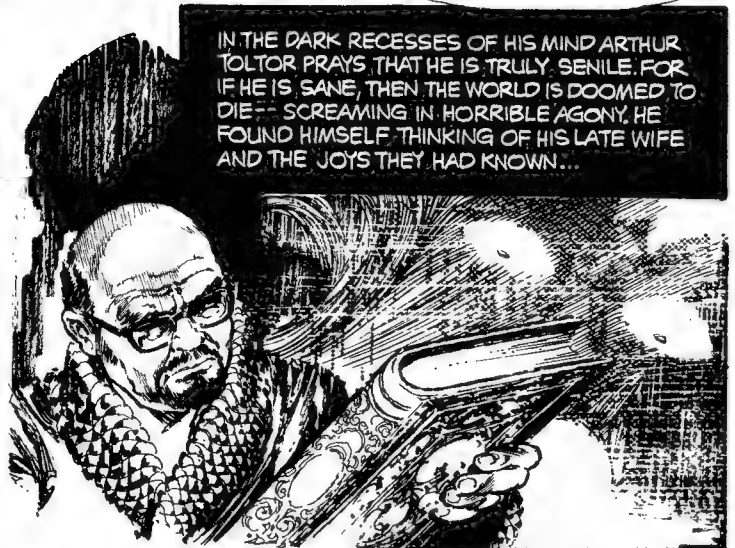
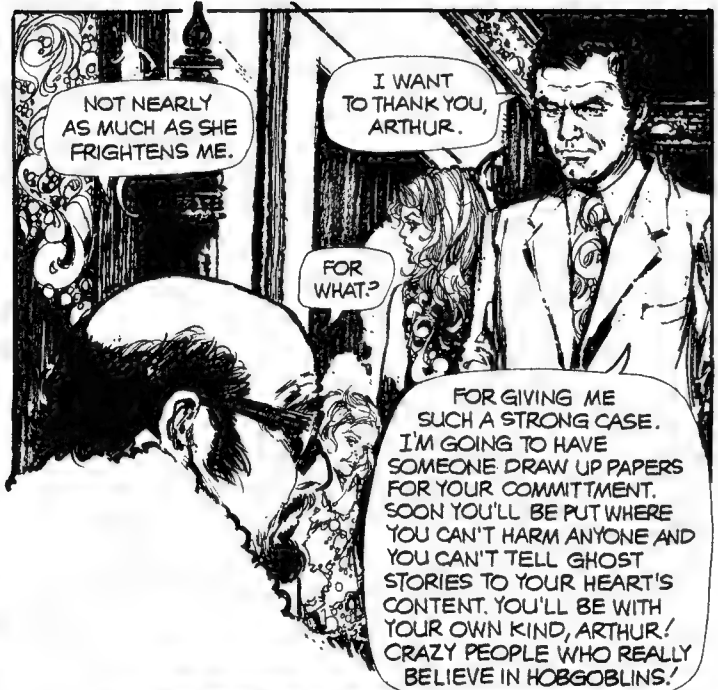
THE FIGURE IN THE HALL OPENS THE DOOR TO BETTER HEAR THE WORDS SPOKEN IN HER DEFENSE. SHE KNOWS THAT NO ONE WILL BELIEVE THE OLD MAN, NO ONE AT ALL.

THE CHANGELING WAS LEFT WITH YOU FOR A TWO-FOLD PURPOSE. ONE TO SLAY THE ONLY PEOPLE WHO KNEW A WAY TO PREVENT THE RETURN OF THE DARK ONES, JOYCE AND MYSELF. THE OTHER WAS TO TWIST YOUR EVIL TO SUIT THEIR NEEDS. THEY WILL NEED PEOPLE LIKE YOU-- GRASPING, SELF-CENTERED, UNSCRUPULOUS, AND AVARICIOUS, TO SPREAD THEIR EVIL TEACHINGS TO THE REST OF THE WORLD.

SUPPOSE FOR ONE MINUTE THAT I BELIEVE YOU, WHICH OF COURSE I DON'T, GIVE ME ONE GOOD REASON WHY OUR CHILD WAS TAKEN BY YOUR HOBGOBLINS?

WHY SHOULD GODS NEED ANY REASONS TO DO AS THEY PLEASE? THEY ACT WITHOUT SECOND THOUGHT. BUT THIS TIME I'M ALMOST SURE THERE WAS A REASON FOR SELECTING YOUR BABY.






THEN THE DOOR OPENED JUST FAR ENOUGH TO LET A SMALL HEAD LOOK BACK INTO THE ROOM. THE ANGELIC FACE THAT SPOKE OF EVIL AND TRIUMPH, THE GLOATING SMILE TOLD ARTHUR TOLTOR THAT HE WAS NOT SENILE, NOT AT ALL.

POOR ROSEMARY! DO YOU SUPPOSE SHE HAD TWINS?





HIDE AND SEEK IN THE
CITY OF THE DEAD? TAG
AMONG THE AZTEC TOMBS? OR A
GAME FAR MORE GRAVE FOR OUR
TWO FUGITIVES FACING A GHOSTLY
PROCESSION OF THE...

BLOOD BROTHERS!

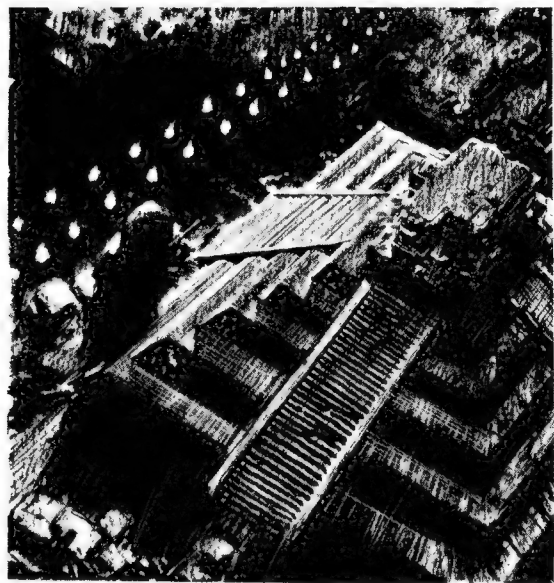
GOVERNMENT
TROOPS? WE ARE
DEAD MEN MIGUEL!

NO YOU FOOL--
THEY ARE ONLY
MONKS!

WE CAN ESCAPE BEFORE
THEY **RETURN!**

HMMM...
WHY DO THE HOLY
MEN **HIDE** LIKE
HEATHEN **THIEVES?**

WE SHALL
FOLLOW THEM,
SANCHO!





MY WOMAN'S VILLAGE IS CLOSE-- WE WILL BE SAFE... COME...

LOOK --A STONE PATHWAY, CLEARED OF VINES!



WHAT THE... TRAIL LEADS TO...

A SOLID STONE MOUNTAIN? DID THE BROTHERS VANISH INTO THE NIGHT ITSELF?!

CAUTIOUSLY THE TWO WOULD-BE REVOLUTIONARIES FIND THEMSELVES IN A DARK TANGLE OF STRANGLING VINES.

MIGUEL, WHAT IS HAPPENING?

PLEASE LET US GO!

QUIET, SANCHE!

ONLY SATAN'S WORK IS DONE AT NIGHT! BUT WHY?

THE ANSWER COMES, WITH THE SOFT SOUND OF SANDALS ON STONE, SICKENING SOUNDS...



WHAT IN...?

A YOUNG MONK RUNS OUT INTO THE CLEARING AS IF PURSUED BY DEATH ITSELF!

YAAAAAHHHH!!!



DIOS MIO!



DEMONS! YOU WILL NOT TAKE ME! I WILL KILL YOU ALL!

UNHHH!!!



YOU WILL **NOT**
BE KILLING ANYONE,
MY FRIEND-- LEAST
OF ALL, POOR
SANCHO!

HE IS
DEAD!

AND MY RIBS
BLEED! WHY DID
YOU WAIT SO LONG
TO STOP HIM?



I AM GOING--
NOW! IF YOU WISH
TO JOIN ME--
COME!

I WILL BE
WITH YOU IN A
MOMENT, SANCHE--
THIS MONK'S
WEAPON INTERESTS
ME!

POCKETING THE STRANGE WEAPON, MIGUEL
FOLLOWS HIS WOUNDED LIEUTENANT TO A
SMALL, SLEEPING VILLAGE...



SO MY HUSBAND,
YOU AND EL LEADER
BLEW **ANOTHER**
REVOLUTION!

SHUT UP
CONSUELA!

OUCH! EASY
WOMAN!



YOU LAUGH,
WOMAN-- BUT SOON
I SHALL **DEFEAT** OUR
OPPRESSORS WITH
THEIR OWN WEAPON--
GOLD!



GOLD?!



SI, WITH PESOS
WE BUY GUNS,
BULLETS...

THIS FOOL'S
GOLD HE PROMISES
WILL PUT YOU BEFORE
A FIRING SQUAD!



WOMAN, YOU SEEM
TO KNOW SO MUCH--WHO
ARE THE HOODED MONKS
WHO PROWL THE JUNGLES
AT NIGHT?



WHAT DO YOU
WANT WITH THE
BROTHERS OF
DOOM?!

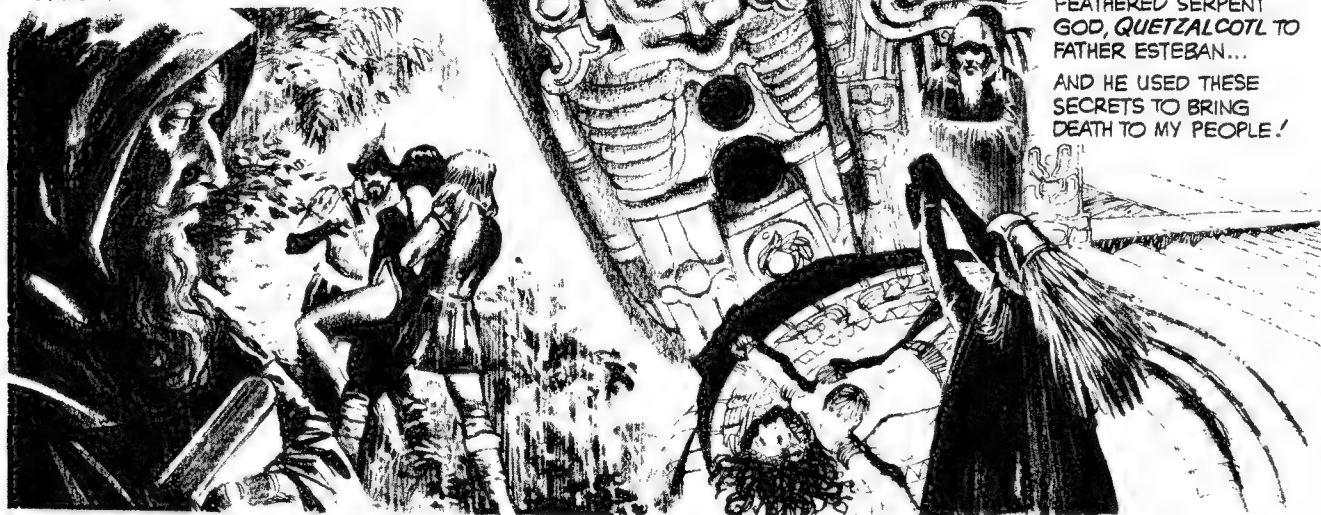
JUST
ANSWER HIM,
WOMAN!

BEWARE MIGUEL!
FATHER ESTEBAN
FOUNDED THEIR
ORDER!

MANY YEARS GONE, FATHERS
OF MY BLOOD SAT IN COUNSEL
WITH THE GREAT **MONTEZUMA**...

BEFORE THE WHITE MEN FROM THE SEA
COME TO **PLUNDER** OUR LAND **FATHER
ESTEBAN** CAME--NOT FOR **GOLD**--
BUT FOR **KNOWLEDGE**...

AND SOON THAT KNOWLEDGE BECAME
CORRUPT.



OUR PRIESTS **REVEALED**
THE **LIFE-GIVING**
RITUALS OF THE
FEATHERED SERPENT
GOD, **QUETZALCOTL** TO
FATHER **ESTEBAN**...

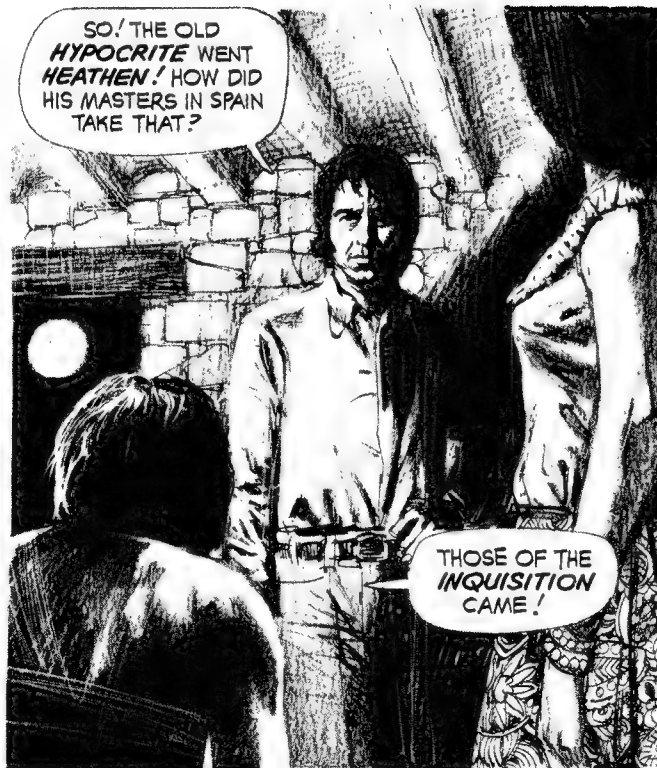
AND HE USED THESE
SECRETS TO BRING
DEATH TO MY PEOPLE!

FATHER ESTEBAN BUILT A MAD MONUMENT TO HIMSELF--
USING MY PEOPLE'S SWEAT AND BLOOD; MANY DIED
AS THE TEMPLE NEARED COMPLETION...

HE CREATED THE **BROTHERS OF DOOM!**
THEY PREACHED THE OLD WORDS OF THE **VANISHED**
ONES!



SO! THE OLD
HYPOCRITE WENT
HEATHEN! HOW DID
HIS MASTERS IN SPAIN
TAKE THAT?



THOSE OF THE
INQUISITION
CAME!

THEY WERE **EVIL** MEN... BUT
SOON THEY **VANISHED** IN THE
NIGHT!

THE BROTHERS **SEALED**
THE DOORS TO THEIR TEMPLE...
AND FROM THAT TIME ON, THEY
SPOKE WITH NO ONE!



FATHER ESTEBAN DIED, AND HIS PEOPLE **MOURNED** HIM AS THEY
WOULD A GOD...



TO THIS DAY, THE
BROTHERHOOD OF DOOM
GUARDS THE **SACRED**
AZTEC TREASURES FROM
MEN OF **GREED!**



ONLY A
FOOL BELIEVES
SUCH TALES!



THEN I AM A
FOOL -- BECAUSE
I HAVE **PROOF** IT
EXISTS!





THIS EBON KNIFE!!!

ONCE SWARTHY SKINNED CRAFTSMEN HEWED THE BLACK VOLCANIC GLASS FOR AN EDGE KEEN ENOUGH TO REND **HUMAN FLESH!** FOR THIS DIVINE BLADE, THIS KNIFE OF OBSIDIAN, FIT ONLY FOR AN OBSCENE RITE, THEY FASHIONED A HILT IN THE IMAGE OF A SQUAT, DEFORMED DEMI-GOD, WHO LAUGHS ETERNALLY... PERHAPS AT THE VERY MORTALS WHO CAST HIS UGLY LIKENESS IN PRECIOUS, **MOLTEN GOLD!**



MIGUEL! WHAT EVIL HAVE YOU DONE?

STRANGE WEAPONS FOR YOUR INNOCENT MONKS!

BUT AN **ANTIQUE** WE CAN TRADE FOR A **GUN!**



STUPIDO! THAT IS WHY I, **MIGUEL**, SHALL BE EL PRESIDENTE! NOT **ONE** GUN SHALL WE HAVE-- BUT **MANY!**



DID THE AZTECS HAVE ONLY ONE SUCH GOLDEN KNIFE? **NO!** AND WE SHALL FIND MORE **GOLD** SUCH AS THIS!

SOON I SHALL BE **RICH**-- WITH OUR PRETTY CONSUELA'S HELP!

NO! THE OLD GODS WILL **PUNISH**...



SLAP!

YOU WILL TELL ME ALL I MUST KNOW TO FIND THIS **GOLD!** **NOW!**

UUUHH!

CONSUELA SPEAKS, HESITATINGLY AT FIRST, REVEALING ALL SHE KNOWS OF THE BROTHERHOOD. AND SO -- THE NEXT MORNING, A "NEW" MIGUEL STANDS BEFORE THE DREADED GATES OF DOOM.



I SEEK **SANCTUARY** FROM MY SINS. ALLOW ME BUT A WORD WITH YOUR **SUPERIOR!**

HE IS ADMITTED TO THE TEMPLE AND LED THROUGH CORRIDORS RICH WITH ANCIENT ARTIFACTS...



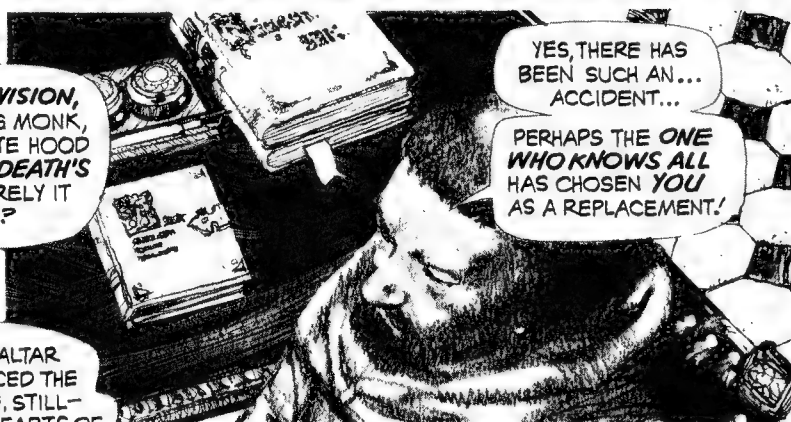
BUT FATHER JOAQUIN I BEG OF YOU...

YOU ARE TOO **WORLDLY** MY SON. AND OUR ORDER IS ONLY OPEN UPON THE **DEATH** OF A BROTHER. YOU MAY **NOT** JOIN US.

A DEATH? WAIT-- THE MAN I KILLED...



I HAD A **VISION**, OF A YOUNG MONK, WHOSE WHITE HOOD COVERED A **DEATH'S HEAD.** SURELY IT IS A SIGN?



YES, THERE HAS BEEN SUCH AN... ACCIDENT...

PERHAPS THE **ONE WHO KNOWS ALL** HAS CHOSEN **YOU** AS A REPLACEMENT!

... DEEP WITHIN THE **MOLDERING** MONASTERY, WAS A **MUSEUM**, WHERE THE **VICTORIOUS** BROTHERHOOD PRESERVED ITS TROPHIES OF A VANQUISHED **PAGANISM!**

ON THIS ALTAR THEY PLACED THE BLEEDING, STILL-BEATING HEARTS OF THE SACRIFICIAL VICTIMS --

AS AN OFFERING TO OUR **GODS!**

ONLY **WORTHLESS** CURIOS OF WOOD AND STONE!

YET THE GOLD **MUST** BE HERE... SOMEPLACE!

GOOD LORD!!



THINK WELL MY SON, BEFORE JOINING US... **FATHER ESTEBAN** COMMANDED THAT ONCE A MAN ENTER THE **BROTHERHOOD OF DOOM** HE SHALL NOT LEAVE US **ALIVE!**

NEVER HAD A MAN WILLINGLY **PLEADED**
FOR A MORE **PAINFUL** LIFE...



...NEVER HAD A MAN TOILED AS HARD
FOR A REWARD THAT SEEMINGLY
NEVER WOULD COME...

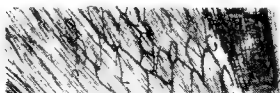


... UNHHH... THE **GOLD!**
I **WILL** FIND THE GOLD... NO
MATTER HOW LONG IT TAKES...
NO MATTER WHAT
I MUST DO!

AT EVENING PRAYERS...



SOON THEY
SHALL KNEEL BEFORE
ME, AND **BEG** FOR
MERCY!



YET HIS DAYS OF FALSE
PIETY GO UNREWARDED;
WITH THE WAXING OF THE
MOON, HE HEARS THE
SOFT SHUFFLE OF
SANDALS...



STILL THEY DO NOT
ENTRUST ME WITH THE
SECRET OF THEIR
MIDNIGHT **RITUALS!**

I CAN WAIT
NO LONGER!



WITH DAYBREAK, MIGUEL INTENSIFIES
HIS EFFORTS TO APPEAR A MARTYR
TO THEIR GOD!



... **GOLD!**
IT MUST BE MINE!
IT MUST...!

FUTILE UNTIL THE EVE OF THE MOON'S FULLNESS...

MY SON, YOUR
DEVOTION HAS EARNED
ITS **REWARD** -- TONIGHT
ALL THE **MYSTERIES** OF
OUR ORDER SHALL BE
REVEALED TO YOU!



AT LAST!

THAT NIGHT...

I AM A FOOL! OF
COURSE THE TREASURE
IS NOT IN THE MONASTERY.
-- IT IS *HERE* IN THE CITY
OF THE DEAD ONES!

THE PUZZLING
PROCESSION
FOLLOWS THE
ANCIENT JUNGLE
PATHWAY TO...

HERE A THOUSAND
AZTECS ONCE WORSHIPED
THE BLOOD THIRSTING GOD,
QUETZALCOATL.

ALMOST A NATURAL
CATHEDRAL, IS IT
NOT?

HERE I WILL
TRAIN MY
GUERRILLA
FORCES!

A CAVE,
CONCEALED BY A
BALANCED STONE SLAB.
THAT IS HOW THEY
VANISHED SO EASILY!

OVER 400
YEARS AGO, FATHER
ESTEBAN WAS TAKEN
BENEATH THIS ALTAR
BY THE HIGH
PRIESTS...

HE VOWED
ETERNAL PROTECTION
FOR THEIR TRUST...

SLOWLY MIGUEL SHUFFLES THROUGH THE MAZE OF CAVES-- FINALLY ENTERING THE DUSTY HALL OF ROYAL MUMMIES

KINGS WITH GOLDEN DEATH MASKS!

AND THE CLEVER INQUISITIONERS WHO TRIED TO CONDEMN ESTEBAN TO THE FLAMES. THEY DIED SLOWLY... HORRIBLY!!

AND THIS IS THE CHAMBER OF OFFERINGS!

BREAST PLATES OF GOLD! JADE! AND A THOUSAND GEMS!

WEALTH, POWER! YOU FOOLS... ENOUGH TO RULE THE WORLD!

I HAVE COME TO LEAD YOU!

POWER IS IN THE WAYS OF THE OLD ONES!

AS FOR YOU, MORTAL-- YOU ARE TO REPLACE THE BROTHER YOU CALLOUSLY KILLED...

A BROTHER DESTINED TO FEED THE GODS!

POOR MIGUEL BEFORE WE CUT OUT TO MY NEXT PALPITATING PLOT, THE BROTHERHOOD SEEMS TO HAVE A VACANCY--ANY VOLUNTEERS? REMEMBER, THE ONLY PREREQUISITE FOR THE JOB IS A LOT OF HEART!

AARRGGGII!!!

VAMPIR'S VAULT

EVERYTHING YOU ALWAYS WANTED TO KNOW ABOUT

PAUL NEARY

A VERY EERIE ARTIST WITH A CREEPY MIND

The privilege of profiling oneself in a Warren magazine is, like castration, a once in a lifetime opportunity. With this in mind I shall pick the words which fill the following lines very carefully. I was born on December 18th, 1949 in a town called Bourne-mouth in southern England. My early interests in comics revolved around the works of artist Carmine Infantino, my special favourites being the Flash and Adam Strange. The year that followed saw me slowly learning to draw and I became influenced by the drawings of Al Williamson whom I admire tremendously, both as a man and as an artist. In 1967 I began drawing for amateur publications, and shortly I was to move to Leeds, England, where I had won a scholarship to

study for an honours degree in metallurgy. When I graduated in 1972 I had already completed two stories for Warren and saw no need to discontinue this work. I now enjoy working among people who turn in their best work. I sincerely believe that only until more artists begin to adopt this attitude and work for comics as well as for themselves, will the medium enjoy the prestige it deserves. The artists whose work I most enjoy are Jeff Jones and Esteban Maroto. And although his work was done in a different sphere, I must mention Alphonse Mucha, the great Czech designer. In closing I must say I admire the new look of the Spanish artists and believe this look points the way for American magazines of the 70's.

Paul Neary



Paul Neary chilled readers with his artistic re-vamping of the Frankenstein story in Eerie #48.

WHAT'S NEWS

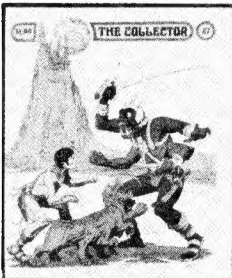
EERIE #49 went on sale just two days ago. (As of the time this column is being written.) Not a spectacular event. Not even an event we would normally note, what with the deadlines of still newer books bearing down on us. But this particular issue of EERIE was a little different. The lead story featured a new horror-hero, **Marvin, The Dead-Thing!** And in his debut appearance, **Marvin** has generated more excitement around here than all of our other EERIE characters combined. Already the mail is flooding the Warren offices demanding the return of **Marvin, The Dead-Thing** and his junior partner **Kid Dead-Thing**. We've got a hit on our hands. So you can count on seeing more of **Marvin** and friend in future EERIE issues. (And to think that we did **Marvin** all in fun!)

It seems that all of our writers are busy pouring their hearts into series these days. **Richard Margopoulos** has just turned in the first episode of a science-fiction series he has elected to do with artist **Paul Neary**. **Steve Skeates** is hard at work (**Steve?** working??) on a companion series to his already-popular **Mummy** feature. **Tom Sutton** is doing both scripting and art on an off-beat hero that's tailor-made for the pages of EERIE. And **Doug Moench** is proving that there's just no stopping him once he gets started. **Doug's** got three new EERIE heroes in the works. And if he has his say, he'll have three more by the time you read this. Then, of course, there's **Allen Milgrom**, **Marty Pasko**, **Gerry Boudreau**, and **Archie Goodwin**. All super-talent reading new features for the pages of EERIE magazine. There's lots of excitement coming in EERIE. But don't dare miss an issue of CREEPY or VAMPIRELLA, either. Cause Warren's on the move.

FANZINE REVIEWS

THE COLLECTOR
1535 Oneida Drive
Clairton, Penn. 15025
\$1.25

The Collector is yet another of that new breed of fanzine whose professional levels of layout and art truly deserve off-set printing. Top quality comic strips including a new feature starring Tower Comics' Noman (with mind-expanding art that sweeps one across the universe) and a new strip by Steve Ditko. Issue 27 also features an interview with artist Gray Morrow.



GRAPHIC STORY WORLD
P.O. Box 16168
Long Beach, Ca. 90806
60¢

Graphic Story world fills a void that has existed far too long in comics fandom. Literate and well-rounded, it provides top-notch coverage of all aspects of comic art, including sections on animation, the underground, and foreign comics. It's in-depth interviews are miles beyond the superficial question and answer corners that plague many of the amateur publications.



MENOMONEE FALLS GAZETTE
P.O. Box 255
Menomonee Falls, Wisc.
53051 45¢

Before the Menomonee Falls Gazette became available, fans of daily adventure strips were hard-pressed to obtain their favorite strips. Now they can follow twenty-four top strips including Flash Gordon, The Phantom, Tarzan, Al Williamson's Secret Agent Corrigan, Foreign strips like Britain's James Bond & Modesty Blaise, along with reprints of the 1940's Superman.



NEW YORK COMIC ART CONVENTION

THE WORLD'S BIGGEST COMIC ART CONVENTION
JULY 4, 5, 6, 7, 8
HOTEL COMMODORE,
PARK AVE. &
42ND ST.,
NEW YORK CITY.



CONTACT: PHIL SEULING 621 AVE. Z BROOKLYN, N.Y.

PREHISTORIC SCENES HOBBY KITS

Now there are 14 great Prehistoric Kits designed to work together in a thousand different scenes. Each figure detailed for Prehistoric accuracy; each package contains historical facts that are both educational & fun!

INTRODUCING SIX NEW FANTASTIC MODELS!!



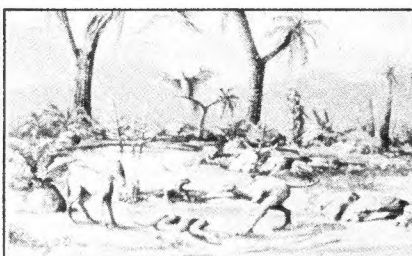
CAVE BEAR
6" HIGH
\$2.50

Most powerful beast in entire Pleistocene period. Worshipped by Bear Cults! Exclusively vegetarian. Was 1/3 bigger than huge brown bear of today! Possessed enormous strength in its huge front legs.



GIANT BIRD
6" HIGH
\$2.50

The Giant Bird or Phororhacos, large carnivorous bird with huge skull, whose jaw was size of a modern horse! Unable to fly, & used its strong, 4-toed legs for attack. 6 ft. tall. Lived mainly in South America &, some say, Antarctica! Ferocious & mean!



JUNGLE SWAMP
13" LONG
\$3.00

Over 60 parts! Trees, plants, pool base, flying reptiles, 1st horse & bird, time scale.



THREE-HORNED DINOSAUR
13" LONG
\$5.00



SPIKED DINOSAUR
12-1/4" LONG
\$5.00

Styracosaurus - heavily armed. 1-1/2 ft. long nasal horn, 6 horn-like neck spikes in crescent. Unbeatable! Found in Alberta, Canada!



GIANT WOOLLY MAMMOTH
14" LONG
\$6.00

Best known Pleistocene beast. Huge! Long, dense hair & fat layer protected it in Ice Age. Giant curved tusks. Plant-eater. Intelligent! Huge!

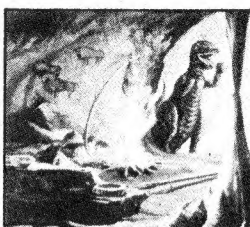
PLUS THESE EIGHT EXCITING FAVORITES!!



SABER TOOTH TIGER
2-3/4" HIGH, 8-3/8" WIDE
\$2.00



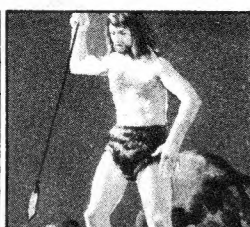
NEANDERTHAL MAN
4-1/2" HIGH
\$2.00



PREHISTORIC CAVE
13-1/2" WIDE, 7" HIGH, 7" DEEP
\$3.00



CRO-MAGNON WOMAN
4-3/8" HIGH
\$2.00



CRO-MAGNON MAN
5" HIGH
\$2.00



GIANT ALLOSAURUS
10-1/16" HIGH
\$3.00



FLYING REPTILE
18-1/2" WINGSPAN
\$2.00



TAR PIT SCENE
13" WIDE, 10" HIGH
7-1/2" DEEP
\$3.00

RUSH ME the following PREHISTORIC SCENES HOBBY KIT(S). Enclosed is \$____ INCLUDING 50¢ POSTAGE AND HANDLING FOR EACH KIT CHECKED.

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| <input type="checkbox"/> GIANT BIRD \$2.50 | <input type="checkbox"/> PREHISTORIC CAVE \$3.00 |
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| <input type="checkbox"/> 3-HORNED DINOSAUR \$5.00 | <input type="checkbox"/> CRO-MAGNON MAN \$2.00 |
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ADDRESS _____
CITY _____
STATE _____ ZIP _____

Sorry, no C.O.D.s, add \$2.50 for extra postage and handling on orders outside the U.S.A.



MY GOD! IS **THIS** WHAT I HAVE
FEARED ALL THESE YEARS?

NOTHING SERIOUS,
NOTHING TO BE ALARMED
OVER JUST A SIMPLE
LITTLE OPERATION.



TELL ME
DOCTOR, CAN
I STAND AN
OPERATION?

FAAA... CHILD'S PLAY. WE'LL
HAVE YOU UP AND AROUND IN
NO TIME.

YOU SWINE. I
NEED ONLY LET
MY SCALPEL SLIP
A HAIR'S BREATH
AND WE ARE
ALL GOING TO
**LIVE
FOREVER.**



I'M SORRY, BUT THE
OPERATION WAS NOT
SUCCESSFUL. HIS
EXCELLENCY IS
DEAD.

WHAT A
MARVELOUS
WORLD IT WILL
BE WITHOUT
DEATH. THINK OF
IT, **LIFE
EVERLASTING.**



I BEG
YOUR PARDON,
DR. MORBIDUS,
YOU HAVE
FORGOTTEN
YOUR FEE.

MY... OH,
YES. I'M SORRY
THE RESULT HAD
TO BE SO
DISAPPOINTING. HIS
EXCELLENCY SHOULD
HAVE THOUGHT OF
SENDING FOR ME
EARLIER.



I AM INCLINED
TO AGREE WITH YOU.
IN FACT I HAD
OFTEN TOLD MY
FATHER...

WHAT'S
THAT YOU SAID?
YOU MEAN...?



YES, I AM
THE OLD
GENTLEMAN'S SON.
I'VE WAITED A
LONG TIME TO
TAKE OVER THE
FAMILY
BUSINESS.



Tyrant
Lizard
King

EMPIRE